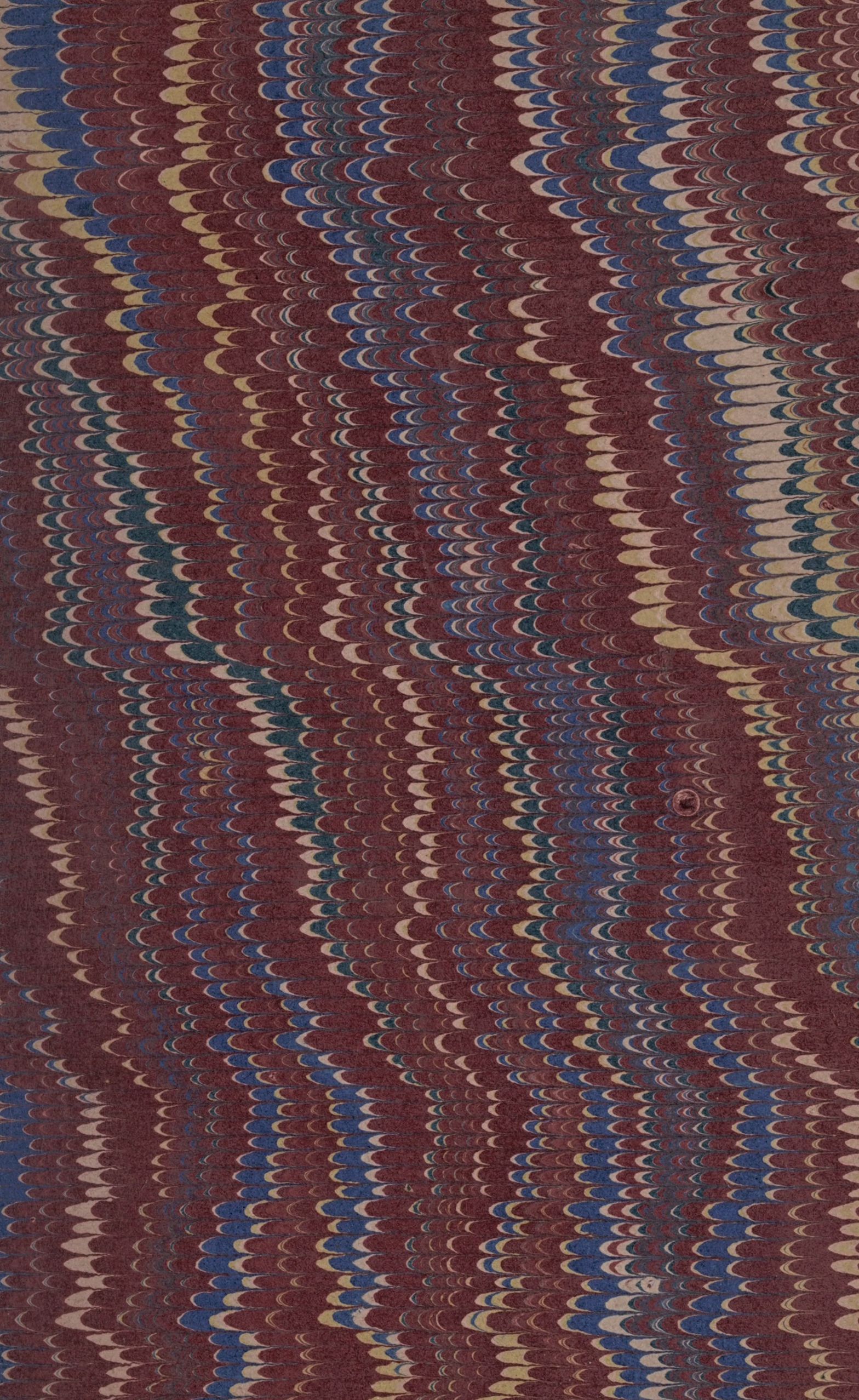


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CAPTAIN MANDEVILLE

A Novel.

BY

JOHN R. McMAHON.



NEW YORK:

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CAPTAIN MANDEVILLE.

PROLOGUE.

PART I.

MUTINY.

The chance visit of a sailor into the hold of the "Bride of Plymouth" was, if not the cause, the antecedent (as a logician would say) of all that followed. In the semi-gloom he stumbled against one of fifty small oaken kegs which were supposed to contain nails consigned to the then only hardware dealer in Melbourne, Australia. It rolled over on its side and the contents emitted such a jingling sound, so unlike that of cold wrought iron, that the sailor's lively curiosity was instantly aroused. Without thinking of the punishment he was in danger of receiving for meddling with the cargo, he set to work with a mar-

linspike and in the space of a half hour had succeeded in prying off the hoops that bound one end of the keg. Eagerly lifting the head of the supposed nail repository, he saw before him rows of gold sovereigns neatly laid in circles, which radiated like the miniature waves occasioned by dropping a stone in a pool ; a single coin in the center representing the stone. So completely astonished was the man that he sat dazed for a moment ; then mechanically removed the top layer of sovereigns ; several thicknesses of flannel were beneath ; more sovereigns and more flannel, and so on to the very bottom. There they were, piled up in a little heap before him, shining and gleaming and reflecting a rich yellowish hue, as bright and clean as if they had been stamped the day before.

The sailor had never seen a tenth of that wealth before and his scanty pay when ashore after a voyage went after the manner of his happy-go-lucky kind. For a long time he remained in the musty hold alternately dancing in delirious joy and gazing stupidly at the precious heap of coins. Then he sobered down somewhat and reflected. He counted the sovereigns—there were five hundred of them—replaced them carefully in the keg just as he had found them, fastened on the head, and shoved the keg into the deepest and darkest corner. When he cautiously made his reappearance on deck the mate swore at him for skulking and had his allowance of grog cut off for a week, with the promise the next offense would give him a taste of the cat.

Eight days the sailor kept his knowledge to him-

self, but on the ninth, being no longer able to contain himself, he told one of his mates after exacting several terrible oaths of secrecy. Within two weeks every sailor in the fo'c'sle was acquainted with the secret and ten days after that whispers of it had reached the cook, the mate, and even the cabin boy. Plainly the "Bride of Plymouth" was carrying a large amount of Her Majesty's coin to the colonies. If one keg contained gold sovereigns, there must be more of the same order. The consignors probably thought there was less risk in sending it that way in an innocent sailing vessel, under the guise of wrought iron nails which pirates themselves would not trouble to disturb, than in employing a heavily armed and manned ship which would proclaim to all malefactors of the sea the cargo she carried and would but require a large attacking force.

The "Bride of Plymouth" was not an English ship, although the Union Jack floated at her mast-head. She had been built at the American port a part of whose name she bore, and all her men, with the exception of the young captain, were Americans. She had been the only available vessel for the consignors of the gold, and as her crew expressed a willingness to sign for a ten months' voyage to Melbourne and back, a trusted Englishman was placed in charge and she sailed from the mouth of the Mersey a fortnight after she had entered it. So long as no one knew of the real character of the cargo, the money was as safe, barring the elements, as if it lay in the vaults of the Bank at home.

Honesty had been with the members of the crew a

simple matter of course. One sailor would no more think of appropriating another's tobacco plug or other like possession than of robbing himself; but on the other hand, none of them had ever come in actual contact with such possibilities of dishonesty before. Between a plug of tobacco and thousands of pounds stowed in the hold in oaken kegs was a difference and a gulf which was irreconcilable. The infection of dazzled cupidity seized every man of the crew and the officers and the sailors before the mast felt the comraderie of piratical rovers. To make sure of their footing, a small force of sailors was secretly dispatched one night to broach all the kegs and discover the exact amount of money aboard the "Bride of Plymouth." Twenty-five thousand pounds was the report—enough to make every man of the crew independent, yes, rich!

But the captain? Would he join his foreign crew in a division of the spoils? A meeting was held in the fo'c'sle and the first mate, a rather ugly-featured, long-limbed man, spoke:

"Mates, we've got only the matter of a week to do our work in and the nearer we get to Melbourne the less chance we'll have. If the cap'n wants to join us, why, I, Tobias Jenkins, say let him. If as he's not with us, we'll give him a snug berth somewheres, and I'll navigate the 'Bride' to one of the islands about these seas. Being painted and with a new name we'll be in shape to sail for Ameriky, where each man gets his share and goes home."

Jenkins squirted a stream of tobacco juice under a bunk as he concluded, and looked inquiringly into

the faces of his companions to see the effect of his words. A plain seaman rose awkwardly from the pile of yarn on which he had been sitting and said :

“Slushin’ the mainmast always came easier to me than talkin’, as you all know well, and I ain’t a navigator like the mate here, but if he ain’t on the right tack I’ll swallow my salt horse ’thout chewing when eight bells is struck !”

“What’s to be done to the cap’n if he ain’t agreeable ?” demanded the boatswain, a sallow complexioned man with the shrewd, twinkling eyes of a Yankee.

“That’ll be decided by vote,” responded the mate, adding, with a grim smile, “the same way they settle things in the States.” He continued : “Larry Powers, Jim Hicks, Joe Burns and myself’ll see his nobs now and give him our ideas, eh, boys ?”

There was no dissenting voice, and the mate, followed by Powers the bo’s’n, Hicks the carpenter and Burns, a grizzly, black-bearded salt, marched to the captain’s cabin.

The commander of the “Bride of Plymouth” was as totally unlike the skipper of the common run of sea tales as could be imagined. He could not have been more than thirty, his face was vigorous and perhaps a trifle thoughtful, his hair was rather dark, and he wore a sharp pointed beard after the French fashion. Indeed, he resembled the Englishman neither in appearance or in speech. He was not a hard master and the men under him knew it, and it was most likely for this reason the delegation walked to his cabin somewhat shamefacedly.

The heavy knock of the mate was recognized by Captain Mandeville, and, without lifting his head from the chart he was studying on the table, he cried out to him to enter. The four filed in slowly, and the shuffling feet drew the captain's attention and caused him to glance up.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, half surprised and annoyed. "What might this mean? Isn't your beef fresh, or is the biscuit too hard for your teeth? And what do you mean, Jenkins, by leading these men here?"

There was an awkward pause for a moment.

"Come, come!" said the captain, impatiently, "don't stand there all day. If you've got any complaint to make, make it and be done."

Jenkins, who had been appointed to the position of spokesman, recovered his lost wits and boldly said :

"No, Captain Mandeville, it ain't the beef nor the biscuit, and as for my comin' with the men it's a matter consarns me as much as them. To put the thing in a nutshell, as we say down Boston way, the crew knows there's a heap of money aboard and the trick is to sail the 'Bride of Plymouth' to Ameriky an' divide it, you coming in for your regular share. That's all, sir."

In an instant this blunt announcement revealed everything to the captain—here was the explanation for the furtive whisperings and strange actions of his crew for the last few days. He was stunned and speechless. So the sailors had discovered the character of the "Bride's" cargo, and were deliberately

proposing to steal the gold and make way with the ship ! His own chief officer was in the conspiracy, too ! Then the color came back to his cheeks and in a voice of iron harshness he said :

“ What you have just spoken is mutiny, d’ye hear, mutiny, and every man jack here will swing from a rope’s end before the month is up unless he goes back to his post. D’ye understand that ? ”

The men seemed almost cowed by the words and bearing of the captain and he was quick to take advantage of his temporary success. Snatching a pistol from an open drawer before him, he sprang to his feet and shouted with energy :

“ Back to your places, every one of you ! The first man that makes a wrong step, I’ll shoot like a dog ! And as for you, Tobias Jenkins, may God help you when we get into port ! ”

With the others the threats of the bold captain operated as a douche of cold water and they forgot the treasure and saw themselves only in the light of unjustifiable mutineers. But upon Jenkins the effect was different. A sudden fierce rage came over him. With a quick blow he knocked the pistol from the hand of Captain Mandeville, who was totally unprepared for this decisive assault. The next instant he leaped upon the captain and twined his long arms about his waist. The bo’s’n was the first of the amazed delegation to come to the mate’s aid. There was something of a struggle, for the captain was athletic ; but the odds of four to one proved too much and he was soon lying on the cabin floor with his arms and legs pinioned by ropes.

"That's a pretty job, lads," gasped Jenkins, breathing hard from his exertions and pointing to the prostrate figure.

"That's so !" ejaculated the carpenter, with the returned courage of an unexpected victor. "And while the cap'n is a-resting we might be taking some of his grog."

The frightened cabin boy, who had witnessed the overcoming of his master from a crack outside, was summoned by the mate and still trembling with excitement took a key from its hiding-place and unlocked the chest in which Captain Mandeville kept his supply of spirits and cigars. A large bottle of cognac and a box of manillas were laid on the table. Each man took a small tumblerful of liquor, smacked his lips and drank it off. Then with a cigar in each mouth the question of how to dispose of the captain was taken up.

Burns, the tangle bearded salt, spoke up :

"It ain't much in my way to make suggestions, but I say, give the cap'n his choice atween jinin' us and walkin' the plank."

"As fer me," said Hicks, "I favor the plank fust and the ch'ice after."

Jenkins turned inquiringly to the bo's'n.

"The carp'nter's c'rrect, accordin' to my notion," said he. "An' what's more, dead men don't bother the livin'."

"You're all wrong, mates," said Jenkins. "It ain't safe after what's happened to have the cap'n with us and if dead men don't talk, the livin' do for 'em sometimes. What—"

The cry of "Land ho!" from the sailor at the wheel brought an end to the discussion for a time and the four men left the cabin hurriedly and went on deck.

PART II.

M A R O O N E D.

The land that had been descried appeared hardly two points of the compass to the port side of the ship, perhaps fifteen miles away, and at the rate the "Bride of Plymouth" was traveling under the influence of a steady breeze it was a safe wager that she would be abreast in an hour and a quarter. The mate, Jenkins, who had already taken virtual command, sent one of the sailors to fetch the captain's telescope, and, mounting the bridge, gazed long and earnestly at the fast approaching shore. Finally he withdrew the telescope from his eyes with a satisfied air and turned to the crew, which had assembled about him.

"It's all right, mates," he said. "What you see yonder is neither Melbourne nor London. It looks to me like one of these islands that're so thick around this part of creation and most like there's nary soul on it. Howsoever, we can show Yankee heels if it happened as there was cannibals or such about and that's all to be afeared of."

In a short time the land had been raised on the horizon sufficiently so that its form could be plainly

distinguished by the unaided eye. It was something like a horseshoe in shape, not mountainous, and covered with trees whose foliage had the rich tropical greenness. Soon through a break in the trees a thin line of sparkling, silvery water could be seen, undoubtedly water of the same sea the "Bride of Plymouth" was traversing. It was, then, nothing more than a terrestrial oasis in the great aqueous desert; a mere strip of land thrown up in the midst of the watery solitudes, a coral island a few acres in extent.

The ship was put about and when within three or four miles of the island soundings were begun to be taken, not a needless precaution, for the depths about the coral regions are most uncertain. One hundred fathoms, seventy-five fathoms, fifty fathoms, thirty fathoms—the anchor was quickly dropped, the sails were furled, and the "Bride of Plymouth" gracefully and incessantly bowed and curtesied with the gentle ground swell.

As this seemed a favorable opportunity, Jenkins summoned the entire crew aft and delivered himself thus :

"Now, mates, the carp'nter and the gentlemen as assisted me have told you we're without a cap'n, the old one bein' confined to his cabin and not bein' usable. We made our plans before and I offered to navigate the "Bride." But we're all equals and if you want another to walk the bridge until the stuff in the hold is divided, why go ahead and name the man."

"Jenkins fer me," declared the bo's'n and another shouted, "Hooray fer Cap'n Jenkins !" No more

expressions of opinion being forthcoming the matter of the captaincy was settled.

"The next thing to be done," said the new commander, "is to part with our friend, Mister Mandeville. Accordin' to my notion this island we're off now'd be a tight little place to leave him. There ain't another craft due along here for the matter of six months and Mister Mandeville wouldn't be in our way if he did get away by then. What's your sentiments, lads?"

"'Tis too good fer him," declared the carpenter, and as in the previous consultation the bo's'n coincided with the opinion.

There were so many diverse views expressed that Captain Jenkins told those who favored the death penalty to stand at his right and those who favored marooning at his left. The smaller number marched over to the side which meant death and the majority grouped themselves to the left of the erstwhile mate. In a grave voice Jenkins announced the decision.

Meanwhile Captain Mandeville, his limbs bound so tightly he could scarcely move a muscle without causing him pain, had been stretched on the hard floor of his cabin consumed with a multitude of disquieting emotions. What terrible lust of money was this that transformed these ordinarily honest and sturdy men into mutineers and thieves! How had they learned the "Bride's" secret and how long had their evil designs been fermenting? What was to become of the trust imposed upon him by the consignors of the gold? His prospects were ruined for life. And then the captain thought of the chances

of his being murdered by the crew. Death did not seem one half so fearful and even partly desirable now that the ship and the cargo intrusted to him were to be stolen; nevertheless, the ever present instinct of life led him to cogitate on the possible means of escape. Even were his arms and legs unfettered it would do him little good. He might indeed barricade the door and make his cabin a citadel, but the mutineers would soon starve him out. A passing vessel whose captain would board the "Bride of Plymouth," a most unlikely thing, was the only chance.

The captain's reflections were interrupted by the noises which told him soundings were being taken, and the final clanking of the anchor chain as the mass of iron shot downwards into the sea. His heart throbbed with a wild, vague hope, which he instantly dismissed. Soundings weren't taken at the entrance to any of the Australian ports; the pilots knew the channels, and, moreover, no occupied harbor was within five hundred miles of the vessel. Then it must be—

These cogitations were cut short by the entrance of the mate and the others who had made him a helpless prisoner. Captain Mandeville suspected, with calm mind, that their mission was to put an end to him, perhaps to slaughter him in cold blood as he lay; but he made no motion, even the slightest, nor uttered a word.

"Well, Mister Mandeville," sneered Jenkins, "perhaps you're sorry now you didn't treat us more civilly?"

No reply.

"P'rhaps he's still too surprised to talk," said the bo's'n, leering.

At length Captain Mandeville spoke, in a strained voice :

"The only thing I have to say is that every man of this crew will sooner or later curse the doings of this day. If he escapes the punishment of the law he will still be punished by his own remembrance. As for myself, let happen what will ; but I swear before God, if my life is not taken, and if ever I have the opportunity, to put you four men through just such torments and more than you may design me to suffer !"

The manner in which these words were spoken did not detract from their forceful quality and in truth they produced an uneasy feeling in the breasts of all except the chief conspirator. He laughed loudly, slapping his thigh in excessive merriment.

"Don't mind his lingo, mates," said he. "It'll be a long enough time before he gets off the Island of Nowhere. He'll herd by himself till his hair grows white, I reckon. Now we can't waste any more time, for it's getting towards night and unless the barometer says wrong there is one of these East India hurricanes due in the next twelve hours."

With little ceremony the captain was seized and led upon deck, the cords that bound his legs being loosened. One of the ship's boats had been launched and stocked with a small keg of water, a box of hard biscuit and half a ham. Captain Mandeville was deposited in the boat with the aid of a rope under

his arms. Four sailors jumped in and the boat was swiftly propelled to the shore.

A smooth strip of immaculately white sandy beach, sloping upward at a gentle angle, afforded an easy landing. The Captain's bonds were cut and he was at liberty, if the solitude of a tiny coral isle in the waste of the Southern Ocean can be called such. The provisions contributed by the humane mutineers were left on a little hillock of sand, and the sailors rowed back to the vessel.

The day was almost spent. Far out in the western horizon the red ball of the sun was shooting its bright rays almost parallel with the surface of the dancing waves. Dark masses of opaque cloud hung threatening in the sky and the breeze had freshened. All indications pointed to an approaching storm. Standing on a rock half covered with seaweed and slimy marine plants, Captain Mandeville looked out to where the "Bride of Plymouth" lay. Her anchor was being drawn up, and the sailors were nimbly unclewing the sails, betokening an immediate departure. The great sheets of the vessel distended like the pinions of the gigantic fabled creatures of the air as she darted through the water in obedience to their powerful impulse. In a half hour the "Bride of Plymouth" had almost sunk her hull and the swift descent of night blotted her from the view of the solitary spectator on the beach.

What were the adventures of the stolen ship and her piratical crew thereafter is not essential to this narrative.

The storm which broke a few hours after the "Bride

of Plymouth's " departure found the deserted Captain shelterless. A wind of hurricane strength whistled through the trees of the little isle, from out the inky darkness of the heavens poured great sheets of water and the ocean, lashed into fury, sent enormous waves crashing far up the beach. The thunderous artillery of the sky at intervals drowned the dull roar of the sea. Captain Mandeville crept under the shelter, such as it was, of a lofty palm ; it was more an anchor, for he was compelled to clutch at times the sturdy trunk to prevent himself from being blown away. At last the elements, as if wearied of their Titanic sport, subsided to a certain degree. By day-break there was no indication that a storm had ever occurred, save for the heavy surf and the bedraggled appearance of the island vegetation.

The Robinson Crusoe of this bit of land, after breakfasting on the provisions which he had taken care to preserve during the night, set out on a tour of exploration. The island was barely three-quarters of a mile long and perhaps half a mile wide. It was nearly level except in the central portion, which was elevated not more than two dozen feet. The soil covering the coral formation was of small depth, yet sufficient to nourish a profuse and luxuriant growth of tropical plants and trees. Of the latter the bread palm was the most abundant, and there were also a number of cocoanut and plantain trees. These natural larders were a source of satisfaction to Mandeville, for without their aid he would surely starve, and the common instinct of self-preservation was strong within him. He also noted that under

the rocks of the beach were great mussels, perhaps not inviting to an epicurean, but serviceable enough to a man with the sauce of starvation. No fire, of course, was to be had, unless Mandeville resorted to the primitive method of creating it by the friction of two dry sticks against each other. Neither was there fresh water, but the milk contained in the cocoanuts would be a fair substitute.

After a week or two Captain Mandeville had accustomed himself to his new conditions. He had built himself a rude hut from dead branches in a sort of natural hollow circled by a dozen overshadowing trees. He used the keg which the mutineers had left him to keep a supply of mussels in, and a heap of cocoanuts and other fruits which the island afforded were piled in his hut, so that on stormy days he need not venture out for his provender. On the top of the tallest tree he tied a piece of his shirt as a signal of distress, and for hours at a time he would be perched in the branches eagerly gazing over the broad surface of the sea for the slightest speck of a sail. But for eight years he never saw one.

It was the time when the genius of De Lesseps had opened a new route to the Orient by the construction of the Suez Canal, and the voyage taken by the "Bride of Plymouth" was one of the latest performed by vessels of the English service around the Cape of Good Hope. Captain Mandeville's little island was now wholly out of the line of travel. When two years had passed he half divined the cause and gave up hope of everything except life. He felt there was

a vague chance of some tramp ship visiting those latitudes, but with the monotonous procession of the uneventful months even this slight comfort was dissipated.

To recount his manner of life, his substitutes for the things which he lacked, his sicknesses, his sufferings for those eight years that he spent on the coral isle, would be to repeat the many like experiences of similarly banished men. His strong mind alone sustained him. When at last he was rescued he was changed from a vigorous sailor in the prime of life to a sober, gray-haired man.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUSPECT.

In the metropolis of the New World there are, as in other cities, three great conservers of public welfare—the police, the firemen, and the health officials. And of this trinity, the last is, if not the greatest, the one most worthy of admiration. Without the uniformed and ununiformed guardians of law, life and property would not be safe, and the criminal element would render the earth a hateful place. Without the firemen, our modern Romes and Athens would be devoured in a night, and the world would be bankrupt. Without the official preservers of health, terrible pestilences would sweep

over the land and decimate the population. But the police have a tangible enemy in the forces of evil to deal with. The firemen know also what they are combating. The health doctors alone oppose a mysterious and deadly foe which is recognized chiefly by his effects. It is as an arrow shot out of the darkness, piercing the vitals of its victim; now, where look for the archer? Moreover, when found he is invisible, and the subtlest inventions are required for his destruction.

Dr. Samuel Jollier, Chief of the Division of Contagious Diseases, was sitting in his office one morning in early fall, reflectively engaged in considering the merits of a very fat and very black cigar which he was smoking. Occasionally he would withdraw the weed from his lips, gaze at it fixedly for a moment, and then, taking a fresh puff, would repeat the operation. He was a stout, and as is generally the accompanying circumstance, a good-natured sort of man, sagacious, full of energy when there was anything to be done; but not given to needless physical or mental exertion. His predilection for abstraction made those with whom he came in contact think he was absent minded at times. In this his associates were often deceived, for when he appeared the most abstracted he was in reality engaged in attentive thought and observation. He had a comprehensive intellect. His enthusiasm for his work was an unfathomed quantity.

Ting-a-ling-ling-ling whirred the telephone bell in the outer office.

"Are you sure you aren't mistaken?" said a voice.
"All the symptoms present, eh? All right."

A moment later a sober faced attache appeared before Dr. Jollier.

"Cowen of East Broadway reports a case of suspected Asiatic cholera at 25 Hamilton Street," said he.

"Strange for Dr. Cowen; he's a most careful man," commented the chief. "Well, I suppose we'll have to send some one around. Williams will be here in a short time. Send him. If any one calls for me, tell 'em I've gone out for a couple of hours."

As he said this Dr. Jollier tossed his half consumed cigar out of the window, locked his desk and putting on the brown derby he always wore, left the building.

When the diagnostician, Dr. Williams, arrived, he received the message of his superior, and started off to investigate the case of the suspect. At the Oak Street police station he secured the services of a grumbling six-foot policeman, and shortly thereafter the physician and the officer had found No. 25 Hamilton Street, a dingy three-story brick structure. The street was narrow and paved, to all appearances, with refuse. A group of raggedy little girls were playing Ring-around-a-Rosy on the scant sidewalk, while their urchin brothers, with early inherited manly instincts of gambling, were indulging in the familiar East Side game of craps a short distance beyond. But for these noisy sports—the young dice throwers made more noise than the little girls—the street was quiet. Not even the peripatetic fruit sales-

man, the rag peddler, or the beringed Italian organ grinder, intruded on its moneyless precincts.

Dr. Williams's blue coat companion kicked lustily on the lower panel of the door of No. 25, no bell knob being visible.

There was a shuffling of feet inside and about two inches of door was opened. Through this slight aperture as skinny and wrinkled a hag as ever lived peered furtively at the two men.

"Hurry up, old woman, and let us in!" ordered the policeman, impatiently.

"What do ye want?" queried the hag, not at all alarmed by the sight of the brass buttons.

"Here, my good woman," said Dr. Williams, in a conciliatory tone. "I'm a doctor and I've come to see your sick man. This officer is just a friend of mine."

"Jimmy tould me not to let anyone in 'cept Docther Cowen," doggedly responded the mistress of the situation.

The policeman hastily thrust the toe of his No. 11 boot into the narrow opening, and, exerting his strength, shoved his shoulders against the upper part of the door. The hag was taken by surprise, although she had hooked the door chain on the inside. The door was torn from its well-worn hinges and it fell back into the hall with a crash, bringing its female guardian down in its fall. She jumped up with unlooked for agility and swore at her uninvited visitors volubly and long, until the policeman threatened to arrest her.

"Where's the sick man?" demanded the physician.

"Go find him yersilf," sulkily replied the furious dame, retreating into the open doorway of a room.

There was no help for it but to make a tour of the house. No one was encountered until the top floor was reached. Here there was an apartment taking up the entire floor. Half a hundred cheap cots were placed in long rows, leaving scanty aisles between. The room was dark and contained not a stick of furniture besides the beds. A strong and nauseating odor came to the nostrils of the visitors. In the most obscure corner a man was reclining at full length and motionless on one of the cots.

"Hello ! This looks like a ten cent lodging-house," said Dr. Williams. "Section Ten violated, too."

By the aid of a lighted gas jet the physician scanned the features of the stricken man. He had a short stubble of gray beard over his face, which bore the clayey pallor of approaching dissolution. His eyes were glazed and they stared upwards at the grimy ceiling with a shocking monotony. One naked hairy arm lay extended upon the unclean coverlet. A spread eagle, with the monogram "L. P.," was tattooed in red and green on the inside of the forearm just below the crook of the elbow. This Dr. Williams noticed when he felt the man's pulse. All appearances and symptoms pointed to the fact that the unfortunate was in the last stages of the Oriental plague. A priori, it was unlikely, a wrong diagnosis perhaps ; at all events, he was dying. His white lips moved as if he were saying something.

The doctor bent his head to listen. This, in a droning monotone :

“M-m-Sir, help a starvin’ man to get a meal. I I—”

The lips closed.

New life seemed to start as if by magic in the diseased frame, the eyes momentarily lost their meaningless gaze. The head was lifted.

“Clew the tops’l’s—aye, aye, Sir !” arose, in a cracked shriek.

The head sank back, and, in the former key :

“Walkin’ the plank is good—is good—”

Again a burst of energy roused the delirious man. In a sing-song he recited :

“Sez the cap’n bold,
In this v’yage there’s gold
Ef ye sail ship properlee—
But, if ye lag away
En back talk say,
Ye’ll be hanged fer mutinee !”

These were the last distinguishable words. A slight shudder came over the unfortunate ; then his limbs stiffened out. The spark of life had fled.

All this while Dr. Williams’s companion had been content to stand off at a respectful distance. Sending him to summon a disinfecting wagon (which serves also as a dead wagon) from Headquarters, the physician drew from his case a bottle of carbolic and sprinkled some of the liquid about the cot and bathed his hands in the rest, wiping them with his handkerchief. This precaution taken he sat down

by the doorway to await the arrival of the disinfecting corps.

In a short half hour the sombre vehicle of the disinfectors rattled up to the house, causing a small panic of apprehension in the neighborhood. Two business-like young men sprang out of the rear of the wagon. One carried a pail of strong smelling stuff into the dwelling and the other a plain canvas stretcher with a rubber blanket. The driver left his seat and followed the young doctors inside. The dead man's corpse was quickly shifted to the stretcher, covered with the blanket and conveyed to the wagon. Then the bedding which he had had was well soaked with acid and likewise transferred to the odd hearse. After thoroughly swabbing with disinfectants the floor, sides and even the ceiling of the room in which the man had died, several saucers of sulphur were set afire and the door and windows of the apartment were tightly closed. The house was placed under strict quarantine until a bacteriological examination should determine the true character of the disease.

The corpse was removed to the city crematory at the foot of East Sixteenth Street and reduced to ashes.

CHAPTER II.

ASIATIC CHOLERA.

"Culture 3,594, rec'd Sept. 7, returned Sept. 8, from No. 25 Hamilton St.—A. Cholera."

Such was the report made by the Bacteriological Division to the Contagious Diseases Division. Needless to say, it caused mild consternation among the officials ; not because of the fact the disease had crept into the city unnoticed, but because its origin was so utterly untraceable. It was not intended that the facts should be made public ; at least, not until there were further developments, but an employee carelessly dropped a hint which sent a half dozen lynx-eyed reporters to besiege Dr. Jollier for information. The chief was somewhat annoyed, but knowing that it was better to furnish a truthful account than have a sensational mass of mendacities published, he told all. Barring the tremendous black head lines and the imaginative illustrations, this is the story that appeared in one of the prominent newspapers the following morning :

"Genuine Asiatic cholera has broken out in this city. The Health Department is in great alarm lest there should be an epidemic of the dread Eastern plague. What causes the more apprehension is that the victim of the disease wandered about the street for an uncertain time while he contained the germs

of sickness. Where he caught the infection is, moreover, shrouded in deep mystery. Other cases are expected to manifest themselves at any moment.

“A professional beggar, who figures on the Department books as ‘John Doe,’ and who was known to his fellows only as ‘Michigan,’ was the victim. He belonged to the Metropolitan Mendicants’ Association, which has its headquarters at No. 25 Hamilton Street, a dark, crooked little thoroughfare a few blocks east of Chatham Square. There he was taken ill with the disease early Friday morning, and died within four hours. He was about forty-five years old.

“Dr. Ezra Cowen, of No. 59 East Broadway, was summoned to the Hamilton Street house shortly before 9 A. M. Friday by a shabbily dressed man who said he was one of the inmates. Dr. Cowen hurried to the dwelling and found the patient in the sleeping room of the beggars on the top floor. He was suffering great pain and told the Doctor he thought he had the colic. The physician at first believed this was the case and administered certain simple remedies. Closer observation, however, aroused his suspicions and finally, becoming satisfied as to the true nature of the disease, he reported it to Dr. Jollier’s Bureau.

“Diagnostician C. H. Williams went to the house about 11 o’clock. There was some difficulty in obtaining admittance because the old housekeeper said she had orders not to let anyone in but Dr. Cowen. Policeman Rogers convinced her it was all right and she opened the door. The man was in a

dying condition when Dr. Williams arrived. He expired in a few minutes. His symptoms coincided with the cholera diagnosis, except that he was delirious. Generally, a person in the last stage of cholera is unconscious.

"The corpse, with the bedding, was immediately removed to the foot of East Sixteenth Street, and cremated. The sleeping room was then treated with powerful disinfectants and the whole house was fumigated with sulphur. Two policemen were detailed to guard the house and prevent anyone from leaving it. When the beggars came in at night, each one was examined by an inspector of the Contagious Diseases Division for any signs of cholera. As soon as they had entered the house they were made virtual prisoners. There are about fifty members of the Association.

"The report of Bacteriologist Wilbur yesterday justified the quarantine, for in the discharges obtained from the dead man the previous day, the genuine spirrilla of Asiatic cholera were developed. To insure correctness two separate cultures were made. In each the cholera bacilli were present in large quantities.

"The movements of the man 'Michigan' for the past few days is what the doctors would like to know. It seems that each member of the beggars' association is allotted a new district in which to operate every day. 'King Jimmy' Standish, the chief of the beggars, attends to that and also receives a great share of the members' earnings to pay for the house rent, food, etc. On Thursday 'Michigan' was work-

ing the district between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and Fortieth and Fiftieth Streets. Nearly all the begging in this section is done at basement doors. 'Michigan' brought home only \$2.90 in small coins that night, which caused the 'King' to reprove him for not getting more from such a rich assignment. 'Michigan' told of the excellent reception he had had at one house. He was given a fine dinner and the man of the house waited on him himself. No one else was around when he dined. This practically is all that is known concerning 'Michigan's' whereabouts the day before he was taken ill.

"It is exceedingly improbable that he caught the germs before Thursday, for they manifest themselves as a rule within twenty hours. If the food at No. 25 Hamilton Street had been infected, the other tramps would be ill. But none of them showed the least sign of the disease, even by late last night.

"Therefore, it is pretty evident the disease was contracted outside the house. But where? And where is that other person sick with cholera? Not even a suspected case of it has recently occurred. Again, it is a mystery how the disease got into New York at all. No ship from a cholera port has arrived this season, nor has the presence of the plague been reported in any other American cities. The sporadic theory is discarded as an easy non-solution of the problem.

"Vigorous efforts will be made by the health officials to find the original source.

"The beggar called 'Michigan' had been a member of the Mendicants' Association for three or four

years. He was very reticent as to his past, but sometimes, when in his cups, would tell how he once was a sailor and voyaged all over the world. No one knew what his right name was, as he always went by the sobriquet of 'Michigan.' It was bestowed upon him because he resembled another beggar who hailed from that State. The police profess not to have known anything about a beggars' society in this city. They understood the Hamilton Street dwelling to be an ordinary cheap lodging-house.

"It is a grimy, three story brick structure with faded green blinds and a mansard roof. Several panes of glass are broken in the front windows, and it has an air of unclean shabbiness."

The publication of the above caused several thousand timorous citizens to adopt a non-liquid diet, and provoked the further publication of numerous articles telling how cholera might be prevented. The quarantined house was watched by reporters day and night, and the manner in which the inmates lived, how they were fed, what they did for amusement, and all, was minutely chronicled. Dozens of suspected cases were reported to the Health Department from other parts of the city, and in each case it proved to be a false alarm. Two weeks passed without any cholera symptoms appearing in the Hamilton Street house. Then the quarantine was raised and the mendicants were free to pursue their chosen avocation. The best indication of the decline of public interest in the affair was the tapering off of the reports in the newspapers, which began

with two columns, scare head lines and pictures, finally dropped to a paragraph, and ended with nothing.

But the mystery of it continued to engage the thoughts of the Health officers for a much longer time. It was particularly exasperating to Dr. Jollier, and he was heard to say that he would give a month's salary for a satisfactory explanation. No one claimed the salary.

CHAPTER III.

MR. GEORGE BARRETT, BANKER.

At the close of a beautiful day, when the sky was clear and blue as the waters of the bay, the air refreshing, Dr. Jollier started to walk home from his office, as was his custom on such days. He turned into that still humming thoroughfare, Broadway, and swung along the pavement at a rapid pace, his erect and stalwart figure towering above the common run of jostling pedestrians. He had not proceeded far when he heard his name called out, and, turning, saw before him his friend, George Barrett, the well-known banker and broker.

"Ah, Doctor, we are both homeward bound, I'll wager, and I see you favor the good old medicine of a walk," said the banker, extending his hand.

"Yes," smilingly responded Dr. Jollier, "I always

prefer exercise to pills. But it surprises me that you can find time to walk. Let's see, how much did the *Record* say every minute of your time is worth?"

"Nonsense!" laughed the other. "My time is worth much less than yours—that means lives, mine only dollars."

"That sounds very well, and, since you have mentioned it, may I ask how the other financiers have treated you to-day?"

The banker made a wry face.

"Well, as to that, it was my own fault," said he. "The old speculative fever got hold of me and I took quite a flyer in Chicago gas. In other words, I contributed to the combination. Just a good lesson, you know; enough until the next time. I'm not supposed, anyway, to risk my own money, but my clients'—under their directions, of course."

"Still, you aren't mourning over it," commented Dr. Jollier.

"No!" exclaimed Barrett. "One loses his regard for money; that is, money as a purchaser of this and that necessity or luxury, when he enters the Stock Exchange. He is in a great gambling game and it's glory or ignominy according as the fates direct. The slips of paper, checks and what-not, that represent his wealth—they are only the weapons with which he fights another man's slips. Actual bankruptcy, when his home and his carriages and horses are taken away, is the only time he realizes what it really means. You see, I am something of a philosopher."

"Quite so. And as this is Waverly Place, I shall

be compelled to leave you to continue the rest of your walk alone."

"Dine with me," said the banker.

"Thank you, but perhaps you know my family is very strict about having me home at such an hour every evening," replied Dr. Jollier.

"Yes, and so's my wife. But I don't mind saying I've got something on my mind that's puzzling; something that you could help me about; an anonymous letter, in fact. I'll show it to you after dinner if you come."

Barrett was so insistent that Dr. Jollier finally consented, and as it was growing late, both men boarded a cable car. They alighted at Twentieth Street and walked across to the financier's mansion on Grammercy Park. The lamp-lighter was just going his rounds in the street when a pompous liveried footman threw open the heavy oaken door, and the banker and his guest passed into the house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER.

Mr. George Barrett, banker, was one of the better types of those men who make money-getting the business of their lives. He was neither sordid nor philanthropic. According to the standards of "the Street," he was honest to a nice degree. Yet he did not hesitate to adopt the prevailing methods of

downing an opponent. His great wealth made him an object of some attention and respect, but he never sought to push himself into excessive publicity. No particularly daring feats in finance had been ascribed to him, and so he was classed as a conservative. He rarely attended banquets and was not addicted to after-dinner speech making. People said vaguely that he was a self-made man. Who and what he was before he arrived at his material success nobody seemed to know ; nor did they care. The past history of a man is only necessary when he is running for a political office—necessary to the other side.

In personal appearance, Barrett was rather tall, and he wore longish side whiskers tinged with gray. His eyes were a twinkling blue. His dress was conventional, except that he generally wore a dark Prince Albert coat that reached to his knees ; his head was surmounted with a glossy tile. Decidedly he did not conform to the notion of a well fed, puffy financier. Some of his friends jokingly remarked that he resembled a Yankee sea captain, a comparison which the banker plainly did not relish. In manners he was unaffected and even cordial, but he had a considerable stock of dignity which he displayed on occasion.

Handsomely and even luxuriously though his home was furnished, he did not derive much comfort from that fact. It pleased his wife and that was sufficient. Mrs. Barrett, a stately sort of person, who did not scorn the assistance of fine clothes and

jewelry in rendering herself attractive, greeted her husband's guest effusively :

"Oh, Dr. Jollier, how do you do?" she said. "It's such a long time since you were here last that I feared you quite meant to cut us."

"My dear madam," said the physician, with a gallant bow, "were my ability equal to my desire I should never be elsewhere."

Mrs. Barrett laughed gayly at the extravagant reply.

A chubby youngster of eight or nine rushed into the room, and, catching sight of the visitor, fairly howled :

"Wherish my pwesent, D'cter Jolly?"

"Why, Eddie," said Mrs. Barrett, reprovingly, "you shouldn't shout like that, and you know it isn't nice to ask papa's friend for presents."

"I think Master Edward is right, Mrs. Barrett," said Dr. Jollier, taking the lusty lunged youth on his knee. "I did promise to bring him something the next time I came. Unfortunately, I forgot all about it."

The look of acute disappointment on the little boy's face was such that Dr. Jollier hastened to solemnly promise something very fine within a day or two. Edward regained his spirits and joyfully scampered away.

"And now I won't detain you any longer," said the hostess "as it is almost dinner time.—P'shaw, Doctor! Even if we had a tableful I'm sure you wouldn't be criticised for not wearing the conventional dress that means so much to do-nothing men."

The host took Dr. Jollier up to his own room and soon the two were ready to dine. Mrs. Barrett was the only other person at the table. After coffee had been served she retired, leaving the gentlemen alone.

A bottle of claret was ordered from the cellar and then the cigars were lighted.

Various topics were discussed and the time flew so rapidly that Dr. Jollier was about to take his departure when he recollected what the banker had said to him on inviting him to his home.

"By-the-by, Barrett," said he, "what about that anonymous letter you mentioned?"

"That's so," quoth the host, losing his care-free expression. "It had quite slipped my memory. Really, now, I'm almost sorry I spoke of it. Doesn't amount to anything, I fancy."

Barrett took from his coat a leather pocket-book and rummaged among the papers with which it was filled. He drew forth an envelope bearing his name in typewritten characters. Inside was a single sheet of thick white paper, which, folded, just fitted the envelope. There was no date line. The letter (also typewritten) read abruptly thus :

" ' GEORGE BARRETT ' :—The time has come for you to meet your God and answer for your earthly acts to Him. Settle your affairs within this week, for before another one commences you will be counted with the dead. The agency employed will be swift and sure ; no one will discover it ; you cannot escape it. REMEMBER THE ' BRIDE OF PLYMOUTH ! ' "

Dr. Jollier read the letter in silence. Glancing at the postmark on the envelope he noticed that it had been mailed between 6 and 8 P. M., the previous day, in some part of the district covered by Station L. Neither the envelope nor the slip of paper inside bore the imprint of the manufacturer, not even a water mark, which fact was ascertained by Dr. Jollier's holding them alternately up to the strong light of the dinner-table candelabra.

"When did you receive this communication!"

"Before going down town this morning," replied Barrett, becoming uneasy at the gravity of his friend.

"I see."

Several seconds passed during which neither man spoke.

The host broke the spell with a laugh which did not seem spontaneous.

"This is childish," he said. "I have no doubt some scamp on 'Change sent the letter. Let me fill your glass."

"Thanks, but I've already had more than I am accustomed to take," said Dr. Jollier, quietly. "As to the letter, it may indeed be a hoax. But I received such a one myself once. I threw it aside. A few nights after, as I was entering my house, a fellow sprang out of the darkness and tried to carve my heart. He missed the first lunge and I rapped him over the head with my walking stick. He's now in Sing Sing serving a fifteen years' sentence. Had some grievance that I've forgotten."

"'Pon my word," exclaimed Barrett, "you frighten me."

"Then I apologize," calmly responded the guest. "Only one might as well take precautions. If you don't mind, I'll catechise you a bit."

"Proceed."

"Have you any real enemies?"

"Oh, lots of 'em !" said the banker, almost enthusiastically. "There's 'Senator' Dobson that I squeezed on the wheat deal six months ago. He promised to bankrupt me if it took ten years. Tom Lachaussee is only waiting for an opportunity to do likewise. John Burrows opposes me every chance he gets. In fact I've got more enemies than I can count."

Dr. Jollier could not repress a smile as he said :

"Those are not the kind of men you need apprehend physical injury from. Can't you think of any one who has a powerful motive to harm you ? And to come right down to a solution, why does your unknown correspondent put your name in quotation marks ? And what is the meaning of the words 'Remember the Bride of Plymouth ?' "

Barrett cast an uncomfortable roving eye about the richly decorated room. He nervously stroked his flowing whiskers. Dr. Jollier regarded him intently. Finally the banker spoke, with an effort :

"Of course I am aware, Doctor, that you regard this conversation as sacred. I am about to tell you something I told no man before. First, I will ring for some brandy, if you have no objection."

Gulping down a small wine glass full of the liquor which a servant brought, the host began :

"My story is a brief one and perhaps you will not

think it worth recounting. But here it is : So far as I remember, I have been in this world just eleven years. Sounds odd, doesn't it? True as gospel, though. One afternoon, eleven years ago to-day, I commenced my present existence in St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco. I was in bed. My mind was a complete blank. I asked the nurse what was the matter. She told me I was recovering from an attack of brain fever ; had been found in the street a week previous and brought to the hospital. Nothing was on my person to identify me except a bank book of the Nevada National Bank, with the sum of \$2,000 placed to the credit of 'George Barrett.' My name might have been George Smith, for aught I knew. That is how I got the name I now bear.

"When I left the hospital everything was new to me. I was not aware that I had ever lived before, only that I could talk English. If I had any relatives previous to my illness, they never came to claim me, and I never found them. I was apparently a man of forty, stout and strong in body, but mentally a child. I began to educate myself by joining a night school. In some of the studies I was unusually facile ; the geography book, for instance, I scarcely glanced through before I was intimately acquainted with its contents. Grammar, however, was uphill work, and I usually went to the foot of the class on that. Having exhausted the learning of the night school instructor, I took up private reading and study, finding much satisfaction in books. Then, with my little capital only slightly impaired, I entered a banking office as clerk. Gradually I was advanced,

What with my savings and the remainder of the original \$2,000, at the end of five years I was enabled to start in business for myself. I made money, came to New York, made more money, married, and now have a son. Vague glimpses of the past have reached me at intervals ever since I commenced my new life. I am often able to accurately answer questions on topics which I cannot recall ever having studied. Then, too, I am shown things that I am unable to recollect having seen, yet instantly recognize them as intimate objects. For about a year I have carefully noted the general trend of my misty remembrances, and I have come to the conclusion that at some earlier period of my life I was a sailor of some sort. Now you have absolutely everything."

While Barrett was relating his history, his guest looked straight at him, albeit with an absent-minded air.

"Doctor!" cried the banker, "I have been boring you."

"On the contrary, I have been deeply absorbed. To revert to my original question, what about the 'Bride of Plymouth?' Do you remember who or what she was?"

"I intended to speak of that. A ship the 'Bride of Plymouth' was, and that's all I can recollect. That recollection only came to me when you asked."

"Then you were captain of her, and the fellow that wrote this anonymous letter was under your command," said Dr. Jollier.

"It may be so," slowly responded Barrett,

Dr. Jollier pulled out his watch. The hands pointed almost to midnight.

"High time for me to go," said he, "and perhaps it may be as well for you to keep a sharp look-out for your mysterious correspondent. I wouldn't walk home alone for awhile if I were you. Take a cab."

"Thank you," said the banker. "I believe your advice is good, and I will adopt it."

"Good-night."

"Good-night."

The two men cordially shook hands. Dr. Jollier walked briskly towards Broadway. Barrett turned back into his house and closed the door.

CHAPTER V.

SUDDEN DEATH.

"Mr. Leland!" called the city editor of the *Trumpet*,* raising his head above his desk so that he could survey the paper littered office and its occupants.

A shirt sleeved young man threw down his pen and leisurely answered the summons. He was of medium height, well dressed (so far as one could judge of that fact minus a coat), and might fairly be called handsome. His features were regular and had a cast which impressed the observer that their owner had a well developed sense of the humorous.

* Of course, this is not the real name of the newspaper.

A certain shrewd look in the dark eyes confirmed this impression and added the estimate that he was not an easily daunted person, but one rather accustomed to conquer over difficulties. For the benefit of those who demand such details, it may be stated that his hair was very black, though not at all inclined to curliness.

"I believe you called me, Mr. Hilton."

"Ah, yes, Leland. What are you doing now?"

"Just finishing the ferryboat collision of this morning."

"How much are you making?"

"Only three sticks or so."

Mr. Hilton murmured "Ah!" and rubbed his forehead as if he were rubbing out an idea.

"See here," said he, "I wish you'd get through as soon as possible and then try to find the Secretary of the Treasury. There's a report that he's in town, but Wall Street doesn't know it, and I don't want our man down there to look for him, because, of course, the combination would have to get it if he did."

"All right, sir," responded Leland, briskly. "Do you know the object of Mr. Vailson's visit?"

The city editor did not.

Leland quickly finished his collision article and leaving it to the tender mercies of the copy readers hastened away in search of Secretary Vailson. It was three o'clock and business, on the exchanges at least, was suspended.

Catching a Secretary of the Treasury who is traveling *incog.*, and who has laid deep plans to elude interviewers, is about as uncertain work as chamois

hunting in the Alps. The former is, if anything, a little the more difficult, for there is but one secretary to catch. Arthur Leland had no very definite idea as to his destination as he dodged the crowds of pedestrians on the narrow pavement of Nassau Street. But it was not the first time he had sallied forth on similar scanty knowledge, and the hope which is said to spring eternal in the human breast was with him an abiding quality.

Close by Maiden Lane, that thoroughfare of jewels, there is a modest little café, much frequented by clerks in the tall buildings where the finances of the country are largely juggled. To give its precise location or describe its outward appearance would advertise this interesting resort, a dreadful occurrence to all chroniclers of events. Entering this café, Leland glanced about from one table to another until he saw, as he had expected, a subordinate cashier in the sub-treasury, sitting in the farthest corner, equally dividing his time between a glass of red wine and an evening newspaper. The man was of a florid, hearty style, and his age was perhaps thirty-five. He was a good friend of Leland and had often been useful *sub rosa* to him.

Yes, Mr. Boden had seen the Cabinet officer. The honorable gentleman had been driven to the rear entrance of the sub-treasury in a closed cab about an hour since. He had met there prominent persons and had made an engagement to dine with them at Delmonico's, in Broad Street, at half past four o'clock. This was the extent of Mr. Boden's information, communicated in a cautious whisper lest

malignant ears should mark his indiscretion in imparting State secrets. Thanking him, Leland departed, considerably elated, to lay in wait at the restaurant for his unsuspecting quarry.

The downtown house of gourmands was well filled with customers when Leland took up his post at a table near the door. A waiter approached and with a solemn bow proffered a bill of fare and asked what monsieur would be pleased to have. Monsieur wished nothing at present ; he was waiting for some gentleman. The waiter bowed as solemnly as before and retired.

Fragmentary bits of conversation, literal Sanscrit to those unversed in the mysteries of finance, floated about.

“—told him to look out for that Wabash crowd—”

“And so he went under, eh? Well—”

“—said zy3—means ‘unload’ in our cipher. Did it.”

“And?”

“Won ten thousand.”

“—why, I think P. C. C. & St. L. bulling was a genuine—”

“—wouldn’t touch those damned bonds—”

“Nipped me badly—was short. But I wired to our San Francisco man and—”

“—elected director yesterday.”

“Sage asked him what right he had in there. Flashed proxies for majority. Kicked old Sage himself—”

Crash ! went a tableful of crockery on the marble floor, followed by a hoarse cry and a dull fall.

Every diner in the establishment jumped up in alarm and looked around for the cause of the commotion. A man seated alone in the center of the apartment had apparently been seized with a fit and had fallen to the floor. The speculators and financiers crowded around the prone figure of the man, and several exclaimed in a breath :

“ Why, it’s George Barrett ! ”

A glass of ice-water was dashed in his face. One man, who never spoke to Barrett on the street, knelt down and chafed his hands. Another hurried out in search of a doctor, if one was obtainable in the neighborhood, while Leland engaged a coupé to take the man home as soon as he should recover. The waiters alone, who had never been taught to do anything besides serve food and receive gratuities, stood idle.

The stricken man presented a peculiar appearance. Instead of being deathly pale, as in an ordinary faint, his face was very red and there were almost imperceptible dark blotches on it. And Barrett was not inclined to be apopleptic. He breathed faintly.

Soon the messenger who had gone for a physician returned, saying he had been unsuccessful.

“ Send for a hospital ambulance,” suggested someone.

“ That would never do. Think of the publicity,” quoth another.

“ But, man, look at his face ! He may be dying ! ” exclaimed the first,

A Chambers Street Hospital ambulance was finally summoned through the medium of a policeman. It was a full half hour before it arrived, and all this while Barrett had remained unconscious.

The ambulance surgeon made a hasty examination and observing a smell of liquor in the financier's breath, rose to his feet and contemptuously remarked:

"He's drunk. He needs to be taken home and put to bed."

Then the surgeon walked out, angrily muttering that people ought to be locked up for calling an ambulance to attend a drunken man.

"I never knew Barrett to drink enough for this," observed the man who had suggested the ambulance. "If it's so, the question is who's going to see him home. I can't because I must take the 5:30 train for Philadelphia."

No one fancied accompanying an intoxicated citizen in a carriage to his house.

At length Leland volunteered. He was quite well acquainted with the banker, and was not unwilling to take a little trouble on his account. Moreover, he had a vague suspicion that the surgeon might have been incorrect in his conclusion. It was after the time set by the Secretary of the Treasury to meet his friends, and as he was a punctual man either the engagement had been called off, or Leland's informant had heard wrongly. So there was no reason for his staying longer.

The drive to Grammercy Park seemed interminable to Arthur Leland. It was an odd sort of predicament, too—to be the escort, in a closed

vehicle, of an intoxicated millionaire. Rather a strange ending of his assignment, thought the young man. Sprawling half on the cushioned seat and half on the floor of the cab, lay Barrett, without sound or movement. The light from newly lit street lamps began to illumine by flashes the interior of the coupé as it rattled up Fourth Avenue. The jehu turned sharply down Fourteenth Street and repeated the quick turn when he drove up Irving Place, nearly throwing Leland each time on his unconscious companion.

It was a welcome conclusion when the wheels ceased to roll and the driver, jumping down, threw open the door of the carriage. The next thing was to get Barrett decently indoors.

"Shall I ring up his vallit, sir?" respectfully inquired the driver.

"Well, we won't be particular about the vallit," said Leland. "A couple of servants will do."

The dignified footman who answered the door bell was informed of his master's helpless condition, and relaxed sufficiently to observe :

"Hintoxicated, you say, sir? Hi never see master that way h afore. Hit truly hastonishes me!"

Thereupon the flunkey called a fellow servant and between them the limp form of the banker was carried into the mansion and to his room. Leland, after thwarting an attempt of the cabby to overcharge, followed the servants upstairs.

If Barrett's appearance had excited comment before, it was stranger now. His face was even more flushed, his hands were white as marble and icy cold,

while his breath came in short gasps. Leland quickly dispatched a servant for the family physician, and cautioned the others not to let their mistress know that her husband was in the house. He felt that he was warranted in thus temporarily taking charge of affairs, for even to the inexperienced eye it was plain that Barrett was suffering from something more serious than excessive liquor.

An onyx clock on the carved wood mantel ticked the minutes away in a solemn fashion. Leland sat by the couch on which the unconscious man was stretched and keenly watched his unnaturally rosy countenance.

After a considerable interval Dr. Shull, the family physician, arrived. He was a fussy little man with a querulous sort of air. He stopped short in the doorway, and, spying Leland, rapidly exclaimed :

“Well, well, my dear sir, are you a friend of my patient?”

The interrogated one briefly explained who he was and the circumstances of the banker's illness.

“Right, sir, quite right, sir ; but I hope that you are not here in your—er—capacity as a representative of—”

The little doctor did not finish the sentence, for by this time he had dropped down on his knees beside the couch and was examining the patient.

“Puz—zling case, ex—traordinary case,” he muttered to himself. “Not apoplexy and he isn't in liquor. Heart's too slow.”

In the next ten minutes the doctor was rushing about and giving directions to servants in a way that

was alarming. He dived into his case, drew out various bottles, and administered some of their contents in turn to the patient. No satisfactory results apparently obtaining from these remedies, he employed hypodermic injections, placed a bag of cracked ice under his head and hot water bottles against his feet. But no improvement was yet observed, and Dr. Shull turned despairingly to Leland.

"Good God !" he cried, "I can do nothing, and the man won't live five minutes longer. Heaven knows what ails him. I don't and I've doctored that man for four years. I never came across a similar case in my life. It's not apoplexy, nor sun-stroke, nor liquor, nor fever, nor a burst blood vessel."

In a more subdued tone the physician added :

"We'd better call Mrs. Barrett."

Leland performed the delicate and difficult task of informing Mrs. Barrett, as best he could. She was entertaining some friends in the conservatory of the mansion. With a set face she swiftly made her way to her husband's room. Leland followed, almost feeling as if he were the cause of the whole awful catastrophe.

Dr. Shull was holding the wrist of the dying man. He dropped it just as the wife entered.

"Is he alive, Doctor?" she asked, in a hoarse whisper.

The physician mournfully turned away.

With a piercing and anguished cry the bereaved wife threw herself across her husband's body.

She was mercifully allowed to faint.

CHAPTER VI.

A MORGUE SUBSTITUTION.

The sudden death of George Barrett caused a profound sensation in the financial world. Half a dozen tottering enterprises, which only flourished because it was known they had his powerful support, fell to the ground and collapsed entirely. Other enterprises, which had been struggling against extinction, owing to his adverse influence, sprang into vigorous life. On 'Change it was felt that one of the Powers, to regulate, destroy, or upbuild, had gone, and a characteristic fluctuation ensued. It was as if an important member of a ship's crew had disappeared and the conduct of the vessel was erratic until there could be a new adjustment and assignment of posts. These were some of the more patent results.

The press, indispensable source of all knowledge, recounted with infinite detail all the circumstances of the banker's demise. "Heart disease of long standing" was the published cause of death. How he had lived and what he had done were told in extended form. He had left a fortune of over a million dollars to his wife.

Some papers printed eulogies of him, as "one of our most distinguished citizens, a model of integrity, a millionaire, yet knowing the grave obligations of wealth, a philanthropist." Some others were not so

praiseful and dubbed him "Plutocrat." Anecdotes of famous moneyed transactions in which he had figured were not wanting.

The funeral from Grace Church was eloquently described. The rector, Dr. H——, assisted by notable clergymen, officiated, and an affecting address as to the sterling qualities of the deceased was delivered. His simple home life was touchingly portrayed. The altar was decorated with beautiful flowers. The ebony casket had laid upon it a floral device forming the words, "Gone to His Reward." The pall bearers were former business associates of the dead. Nos. 246 and 302 were sung by the choir, and a solo, "Asleep in Jesus," was exquisitely rendered by Miss L——. When the modulated voice of the rector ceased, and the grandly melancholic notes of the organ thrilled the solemn air, many were moved to tears. There was a similar display of emotion at the rendition of the solo.

Last of all came the temporary interment in that fair city of sleepers, Greenwood. Orders were given for a costly mausoleum as the final resting place.

It would have been a mighty surprise and shock had the public known that the casket supposed to contain the millionaire's body, over which occurred the impressive funeral services, really held the corpse of an unknown from the city morgue. Such, however, was the fact. Not more than three persons were aware of it.

In her distress on that fatal evening, Mrs. Barrett had sent for Dr. Jollier. He arrived scarcely an hour after the death of his friend. Accustomed as

he was to rude lacerations and often as he came in contact with the stern realities, indeed rubbed shoulders with them daily, his grief was poignant, though he did not show it outwardly. He remembered the anonymous letter which had warned Barrett to "prepare to meet" his "God," and like a flash, the sickness of horror and grounded suspicion entered his soul. That letter had said the one who received it would not live out the week. Nor had he. An assassin's hand? "Yes!" wildly answered quick divination. "Wait. We shall see," said cool judgment.

When Dr. Jollier viewed the remains of what had two short hours before been a breathing, thinking human being, his sudden fears were fully sustained. Even now the face had a repulsive redness and darkened blotches were well defined, a most inexplicable condition. The brief history of the symptoms, the rapidity with which the end had followed the attack—everything pointed to the necessity of the closest scrutiny.

Dr. Jollier's apprehensions went beyond the revelations likely to be furnished by an ordinary autopsy. He formulated a plan which was in effect to have the body secretly removed to a private dissecting room where the proper investigations might be made. If his suspicions proved just, it was better the hidden slayer should not be made known the discovery, for then the chances of catching him were weakened. If it was simply an abnormal manifestation of natural causes there was no particular harm done. The position of Dr. Jollier as Chief of the

Division of Contagious Diseases gave him ample opportunity to carry out his plan. He hurried to the residence of Dr. Shull, and, without telling more than was necessary, obtained his promise not to inform the coroner, as was usual, but to make a sealed report of the case and send it to himself. Dr. Jollier assured the little doctor that he would stand the consequences of such irregularity.

The next thing was to intercept Arthur Leland before he reached the *Trumpet* office, or, in any event, to prevent his writing an account of the banker's strange death. This was accomplished by sending the young man from a convenient station on Broadway a telegraphic dispatch, which read :

“ Make heart disease effected Barrett's death. No sensation. Details later. SAMUEL JOLLIER.”

Leland had just given the night city editor an inkling of the story and had been enthusiastically commanded to employ all the space he wished, when a messenger boy loafed in with the dispatch. The recipient scanned it and felt more than disappointed. Here was a complete first-page, two column article, a “beat on the town,” which would add new laurels to the writer, thrown away ! Leland felt certain there was good reason for the publication of the article he had mentally outlined and the wording of the message confirmed his belief, but he was also aware that Dr. Jollier would not stop his pen without very excellent ground. Even looking at it in a selfishly practical way, the friendship of an official

like Dr. Jollier was of more value than any single article. So Leland, albeit reluctantly, informed his superior of the new turn of things.

"No mystery, eh? Well, that's a deuced misfortune. But as it is, you've got a first-class story. It's a beat on the death, anyway."

And the night city editor turned his attention to the report of a religious meeting.

It remained for Dr. Jollier to engage an undertaker's wagon and secure a substitute corpse from the morgue. The keeper had to be roused from his house across the street. He was very accommodating when he learned who his visitor was and pointed out the unclaimed bodies with brief dissertations on the particular merits of each.

"If you want one for dissectin'," quoth the old man, cheerfully, "I can recommend this here subjec'. He's only a week old and we got him from the river, but he ain't waterlogged nor nothin'. I'll guarantee he's got solid flesh yet."

"What's that you say, sir?" answered the guide. "Tall and with whiskers? Well, sir, there's No. 6. He's got beautiful whiskers, but he ain't tall. Fifteen is tall—five foot, eleven—but he ain't got whiskers. What kind o' whiskers do you like? French cut, long and flowin', or parted? This one's got a nice moustache, but he's been with us quite a while. Seems like an old friend, he does. The fellow in the corner is all right, barrin' he's pretty well soaked with water. Take 24? Certainly, sir!"

Between the driver and the garrulous keeper Number 24 was conveyed to the wagon, and Dr. Jol-

lier gave the keeper a receipt, at the same time slipping a bill into his hand.

"Thank you, kindly, sir," said the obliging dealer in inanimate horrors. "If you ever want anything in my line again, you'll get the best there is, sir."

A church clock was striking the hour of midnight when the black vehicle with its ghastly freight rattled into Gramercy Park. Dr. Jollier could not repress a feeling of satisfaction that so far his plan had succeeded. His hardest task had been to persuade Mrs. Barrett to allow the substitution. Coming on top of her sudden affliction it was a dazing and revolting proposition this—to have her husband's body taken away from her almost before she had time to realize his death, and in all likelihood be submitted to the knives of surgeons. Then to have an unknown unfortunate's corpse take the place of her husband's and be given the funeral which belonged to him. Naturally she was filled with indignant loathing at the bare thought. But Dr. Jollier gently, and with as little pain to her as possible, told the reasons which necessitated the act, and she weepingly assented. A woman of weaker and less intelligent mind would have collapsed with the terrible happenings.

The idea occurred to Dr. Jollier that an empty coffin, or at least one containing something equivalent in weight to a human body, might serve instead of another corpse. In that event, however, the undertaker who took charge of the remains, or some assistant, would learn the deception. Supposing the undertaker, as was probable, had not known Barrett

in life, the secret was safe. One body as well as another would answer for the banker's. Precautions, of course, had to be taken that no friend of the dead man saw the remains. The man who accompanied the physician to the morgue was a trusted assistant.

With a great deal of caution the coffin was carried into the house. Not a soul was passing to observe the unaccustomed spectacle of two men, one of them having the garb and demeanor of, say, a prosperous merchant, transferring a funeral casket from an undertaker's wagon at dead of night into an aristocratic mansion. Dr. Jollier was provided with a key and the servants were not aroused.

Once in the death-room the clothes which the banker had worn were quickly stripped off. The unknown was dressed in them and in his new attire his resemblance to the man he was intended to represent was sufficiently close to deceive at a casual glance. The banker's corpse was then lifted into the empty box and was silently borne down the stairway and into the street. Had there been a spectator to these proceedings he might have imagined himself the witness of a great crime.

Dispatching his assistant to an undertaking establishment on Fourteenth Street, which had the patronage of the wealthy (there is as much fashion in the choice of undertakers as in selecting caterers), with orders for a suitable casket to be delivered immediately at the Gramercy Park residence, the box to be sealed as soon as the body had been placed therein, Dr. Jollier drove off to his private dissecting room lo-

cated near his office. Twice he was stopped by suspicious policemen who did not understand why a well-dressed gentleman should be driving a dead wagon in the streets towards 1 o'clock in the morning. The words "Contagious Disease—Health Department," acted as a magic formula to make the guardians of peace release the horse's bridle and beat hasty retreat.

It was a problem when the destination was reached how to transport the freighted coffin into the building unaided. Dr. Jollier was about to ring up the janitor to assist him when a shabbily dressed man came reeling out of the darkness of a side street and approached the perplexed physician. The newcomer was evidently in a grievous state of intoxication, but he might, notwithstanding, be of service.

"Here, my friend," said Dr. Jollier, "I'll give you a dollar to help me into this house with this box."

The stranger balanced himself unsteadily on the edge of the pavement and responded :

"I'm your-hic—man. Gimme th' dust."

"Not until we're through work."

"Money—hic—first. Funny business like—hic—this worth more'n a—hic—dollar !"

"Never mind what business it is," sharply retorted the physician. "Get hold of that end."

The intoxicated one, apparently subdued, did as he was bid.

The dissecting room was on the first floor, in the rear, so that it would not be difficult for two able bodied men to carry thither a coffin with an ordinary sized occupant. But Dr. Jollier's new assistant

was so much in his cups that he seemed almost incapable of sustaining his share of the burden and threatened every moment to drop his end. If he had there would have been a crash loud enough to wake every person on the block. Luckily no such mishap occurred. When the coffin had been placed on a long marble topped table, Dr. Jollier paid his helper and the man shambled out through the darkened hallway, presumably in search of a liquor saloon.

There was a stable behind the building and Dr. Jollier led the horse, drawing the vehicle which had been of such service, there, and saw that he was provided with a portion of hay and a pail of water in return for his labors.

Then the physician returned to the room where lay the body of his friend. As soon as the first shock of grief had passed, it had been succeeded by those instincts which may be called professional. It was the doctor, the chief of a health bureau, not the man, the associate, the friend, that had evolved the method of discovering what manner of sickness had seized the banker. The doctor and chief had performed the preliminary steps of his self imposed task with great coolness, perhaps unconcern. It was all in the line of his duty and he was proud to do it well and faithfully. But now, as in that silent chamber of loathsome details, at an hour when millions slept and few were stirring, when the day-time hum of the city had been succeeded by a deep stillness, only interrupted by rarely passing jingling street cars or the distant rumble of the elevated

trains, he gazed by the flaring gas-light upon the cold, set face of the dead, he again felt the anguish of bereaved friendship.

This did not last long, for the quick eye of the doctor saw that in the comparatively short time that had elapsed since death, the peculiar ruddiness of the face had increased greatly, and the dark blotches had grown until each was as large as a silver quarter. Truly it was a grave matter and no time to mourn.

Dr. Jollier replaced the coffin lid and with much care washed his hands in a bichloride solution. Going to the office of his bureau, he sent a disinfecting wagon to the house in Gramercy Park, with instructions to the men to quietly perform their work without frightening the servants or allowing them to know from where they came. The final thing done by the indefatigable physician was to leave orders for an immediate bacteriological culture from the body in his dissecting-room.

When he reached his home the early rays of a new sun were beginning to warm the crisp morning air.

CHAPTER VII.

“MURDER !”

Two days after the events recounted in the last chapter, Arthur Leland visited the Contagious Diseases Bureau to seek the explanation of the prohibitive message he had received. He ascended the few brown stone steps of the little two-story brick structure—once the home of a solid citizen—and, finding the heavy, green painted door unlocked, pushed his way in, and walked up the dusty wooden stairs to the office of the Bureau's officials. A light moustached young man whose languid movements seemed to say he was well wearied with this sub-lunar life, the cause for which condition might be variously assigned, sat on a rickety cane-bottomed chair and laboriously copied reports from slips of filled-in blanks into a big, leather-bound volume. At sight of the visitor, he remarked in a bored way :

“What can I do for you, Doctor ?”

“Infuse some energy into yourself,” was the mental response of Leland. What he did say was :

“You can tell me whether the chief is in, Doctor ?”

“No, he isn't,” said he of the light moustache, “but he will be in five minutes. I'm no doctor, though.”

“Neither am I,” said Leland.

"Well, you see," said the other, "most everybody who comes here is, and it's safest to call 'em that."

Having thus explained, the bored young man returned to his transcribing.

Brisk steps were heard on the stairs. The tall figure of Dr. Jollier filled the doorway. As he greeted Leland, the latter remarked that he looked much older than he had appeared a week before, when he last saw him. There were faint purplish rings under his keen eyes, his features were drawn, and indeed he suggested a man worn by much care and consequent sleeplessness. This, for Dr. Jollier, the impassive, the unmoved, the experienced. Strange! The chief led Leland into his private office and carefully shut the door.

"Sit down," he said, gravely.

Leland did so, on a rusty leather covered sofa, while the physician remained standing.

"I must thank you," said Dr. Jollier, "for your kind regard of my request the other night. In return I owe you an explanation, but—"

"Pardon me, Doctor, for interrupting you," exclaimed Leland. "I have no wish to know anything except what you may desire to tell me."

Dr. Jollier held up his hand with a sort of smile.

"No, no, you misunderstand the 'but.' I was about to say, 'but you may not want it.' It isn't very pleasant. And if I tell you I may want your advice, perhaps your aid."

"Both are at your service, Dr. Jollier," earnestly responded the young man.

"Then I will proceed. I will put what I have to

say in a supposititious form, which is a common method of imparting information in works of fiction, and a very good method, too."

Clasping his hands behind his back, Dr. Jollier walked slowly up and down the little room, and thus told his story, as though he were only talking to himself :

"Supposing that in this city the Division of Contagious Diseases should be informed one morning that a case of suspected Asiatic cholera had been found in a poor quarter of the town. Supposing the proper investigations should be made and it should turn out to be a genuine case of cholera ; the victim a wretched beggar, who lived with a number of his kind. Previous to his attack he has been plying his profession in an aristocratic neighborhood. He had formerly been a sailor, but never liked to talk about his experience on the seas. His dying words referred to a crime. Supposing the most energetic search should establish the fact that his was a perfectly isolated case, there being no other cholera within 3,000 miles. Supposing all attempts to trace the origin of his disease proved futile. It was not communicated.

"Now, the second proposition : Supposing that a few weeks after, the chief of this Division should call on a friend, a highly respected man, a well known financier. Supposing this friend should show the chief an anonymous letter, telling the recipient that he would not live but a few days, because of some of his 'earthly acts' and admonishing him to 'remember the "Bride of Plymouth."' Supposing this

wealthy man should say he was totally at a loss to understand the allusions contained in the letter. He should say that his recollections only went back about a dozen years, when he discovered himself in a San Francisco hospital, recovering from brain fever. A bank book representing quite a sum of money to the credit of a name he since then bore was in his pocket when he was picked up in the street. With that money he educated himself—for he was almost like a child—and had enough left to start into business for himself. Finally he came to New York and became one of the foremost of Wall Street operators, married, had a boy. Sometimes he faintly remembered things which led him to conclude he had before his illness sailed the ocean for an extended period. Supposing these faint glimpses into his past should reveal to him that the ‘Bride of Plymouth’ mentioned by his anonymous letter correspondent was a once familiar ship. Supposing the man had no enemies of importance to his knowledge. He, according to his memory, had wronged no one. Now, supposing that letter should come true. Within the time set, he should be stricken down while dining in a restaurant—to die in his house an hour afterwards. Supposing the chief of the Contagious Diseases Division should be summoned to the house, and, learning the circumstances and seeing the unnatural appearance of his dead friend, should have his suspicions aroused. Supposing he should arrange matters so that it should be given out that the man had expired from heart disease. Supposing he should, with the knowledge

of a very few persons, remove the corpse so that an examination could be made, another body taking the place of the financier's for purpose of caution. Supposing there should be an excessive inflammation in the **fleshy** portion of the deceased's neck, in the back, and the skin should show under the microscope a **tiny puncture**. Supposing a bacteriological culture should be made right from that spot, which should determine the man had died of a terrible and virulent disease, uncommon to human beings, so rare that not a dozen cases of it are recorded in medical history—supposing all this were true, what would be your inference?"

Arthur Leland had been listening to the physician's measured words with fascinated and excited interest. As the trend of the "suppositions" became more and more defined, he could hardly restrain himself from an eager interruption, though he would not have known exactly what to have said or asked. From point to point his imagination flashed and automatically filled in the gaps of the amazing recital. It seemed to him as if he were attending a great tragic piece, with the real characters before him instead of the players; he the sole audience; and his emotions wrought up to correspond with the performance. When the words ceased and the question was directed to him, he answered quickly, almost without self volition:

"Murder!"

"That is my belief," said Dr. Jollier, in a voice hardly above a whisper.

For a few seconds Leland sat in silence, his

thoughts in a tangled whirl. Then he asked, hesitatingly :

“What was—the—disease?”

“It was,” said Dr. Jollier, with a yet graver intonation, “what is usually known as anthrax, or malignant pustule. Animals, sheep particularly, are inclined to it. It is pathogenic to man, but, as I said, uncommon. It is caused by bacilli which multiply with inconceivable rapidity, and it proves fatal in a very short time. It is capable of being disseminated from any point where it is introduced, unlike the cholera germs, which must reach the intestines to do any harm. In the few cases that have been observed, the human victims of anthrax have died without showing any objective symptoms. In this case, such an enormous quantity of the bacilli was introduced that they produced the effects which led to the discovery of the cause. The system made desperate attempts, by suffusing the head with blood, to counteract the foreign elements. A man of less sturdy physique and weaker vital organs would have succumbed much sooner.”

Sick with horror sat the young man at this revelation of the work of a mysterious fiend, whose demoniacal resources exceeded the greatest reputed power of a mediaeval professor of black art. How secretly and silently was the frightful enemy introduced, with its victim so blissfully unconscious of harm that he would have laughed the thought away had it been suggested to him that he carried death within him ! An inconsequential prick in the neck, such as no one would notice in a moment of excite-

ment, and the man was as surely doomed as if his throat was cut from ear to ear. And no less malevolent and terrible appeared the slaughter of that unfortunate beggar. His draught of super poison had been given in meat and drink, probably in response to his own whining request for food. What was the connection between that wretchedest of beings and the wealthy and respected citizen, both of whom apparently succumbed to the same opponent? Was there any, as Dr. Jollier intimated, or was the unknown murderer simply a scientific madman who scattered fearful death among the human race with haphazard hand? Could it be that the emissaries of anarchy had discarded the dynamite bomb and the pistol for the more refined and secret weapons of disseminable disease? Was this newest branch of science to be utilized for the destruction of society?

These rather wild surmises were checked by the practical words of the physician.

As before, he seemed to be talking to himself rather than to his auditor, as he said :

“We must figure out how this thing was done and form some sort of a theory to work on. Many years ago the East Side mendicant, whose name we don't know, and Barrett were shipmates. That seems pretty certain to me. There was a third man and in this problem he must be represented by X. The ship was the ‘Bride of Plymouth.’ X received some real or fancied injury from the other two. When he gave up his seafaring life and separated from his companions, he took up the study of medicine. He became proficient in the art ; he particu-

larly devoted himself to laboratory work in bacilli. Revenge was still uppermost in his mind when he came to this city. Perhaps he studied here. Either his mind was unbalanced or his hatred partook of the bitter, undying nature characteristic of certain of the European races. He kept track of his former shipmates, intending to satisfy his revenge at the first opportunity. At least that is probably so of Barrett. It is unlikely he followed the career of the mendicant. But one day last month when X was alone in his house, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and Fortieth and Fiftieth Streets, there was a ring at the basement bell. X answered it and saw standing before him one of the men who had injured him. The recognition was only one sided. X invited him inside and set a fine meal before him. A damnable idea of securing his long delayed purpose came to him and he hastened to put it into execution. He went to the room where he kept his cultures and taking the cholera tube inserted a piece of wire in the infected gelatine, or whatever medium it was. This wire, now swarming with myriads of cholera germs, he whipped about in a glass of milk, perhaps, and also rubbed the edges of the glass with it. The beggar unsuspectingly drank the milk—and that's the whole story as regards him. Having been so successful the first time, X determined to apply a similar method to Barrett. It would be a more exquisite torture, he thought, to write Barrett of what was coming. He did not know of the brain fever incident and its consequent loss of memory ; otherwise he would not have taken the trouble. He filled

a hypodermic syringe with a solution pregnant with the anthrax bacilli. He learned Barrett's habits ; that he was accustomed to walk home after business hours. He dogged Barrett's footsteps, and when he saw a good chance, perhaps in a crowd, he drew the syringe from his pocket and pricked his victim with the point, in the back of the neck. Just there because it was most convenient. Barrett had promised me not to walk out alone for a while, but he evidently forgot. Such a slight prick attracted Barrett's attention only for a moment ; then he dismissed it from his thoughts. That is my theory of the case. Now, how to proceed in catching X."

"Go to the medical colleges and hospitals and all who have access to the bacteriological departments connected with them," suggested Leland, with almost a feeling of triumph at his insight.

"Useless !" said Dr. Jollier, decisively.

"Why ?"

"Because every third rate college and school in America has now more or less of a collection of bacilli. There are twenty laboratories, to my own knowledge, in New York. Then think of the innumerable ones in Europe. Working from that end would be a more difficult enterprise than looking for the historical needle in the historical haystack."

"Then what is to be done ?" cried Leland.

"As far as I see," said the physician, "the point to commence from is the name of the 'Bride of Plymouth.' We must find out where she sailed from, who were aboard her, and the entire circumstances. Probably, as her name indicates, she was an Ameri-

can vessel, although there are, of course, other 'Plymouths' besides the New England one."

"Doctor, what a coincidence!" ejaculated Leland. "I must take the midnight train this very night for Plymouth, Massachusetts. There have been a lot of reports of sea serpents seen about there and not an hour since I got the assignment of going there to obtain a Sunday article for the *Trumpet* on those serpents. As I will remain for at least a day and a night I will have plenty of time to make the inquiries you wish."

"Very good," replied Dr. Jollier. "I know you require no instructions or hints as to finding out what there is to be learned. And I know you realize the importance of the information. Now, I'm scheduled to be at a Board meeting soon; so good-by. I hope you'll have a pleasant journey, and bring back some news for me."

"I hope so, too," said Leland, as he shook hands with Dr. Jollier and left the office.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SARTORIS HOUSEHOLD.

Miss Maud Sartoris was undoubtedly a charming young woman, both in nature's gifts, and in acquired attainments. Had she moved in that society which eats, drinks, dances and dresses, and is presided over by some master genius, she would have

won a great deal of attention and many admirers. But her circle was a trifle less extended than that, or, more, shall we say? The only daughter of a widowed professor in a collegiate institution of learning, her education and training had been of a peculiarly favorable kind. At twenty her stock of wholesome knowledge was greater than most young ladies ever possess. Latin and Greek and geometry were no dark mysteries to her. French she could speak a little, likewise German; she was a skillful player on the piano and took somewhat to water colors. Nor did she lack the feminine graces and was the very opposite of the unhandsome, spectacled type of a studious young woman. In figure she was slightly above the average height, her form such as a painter would have liked for a model. The contour of her face was delicate, yet bold in its way, and you instinctively felt that patrician blood flushed that soft cheek. The brightness of vigorous womanly health shone from the clear blue eyes. Soft, fluffy hair, in color a shade between brown and flaxen, crowned the head, and some of it strayed negligently on the upper part of the forehead. A Grecian knot confined the vagrant locks in the back.

Just now she looked particularly fair as she rested on a gayly embroidered divan in the bay window of her father's modest brownstone front residence in West Forty-third Street, near Fifth Avenue. She had been glancing through a volume of poems, but had laid the book down on her lap, with one rosy tipped finger keeping the place. A pensive expression was on her face.

A martial appearing, white haired man, who was drawing on a pair of gloves preparatory to going out of doors and who carried in his hand a glossy silk hat, entered the room. He was Prof. Ralph Sartoris, occupant of the chair of Metaphysics and Logic in Columbia College, as near an exemplified definition of the Southern eulogy, "A man and a gentleman, sir!" as could be found. His face was smooth shaven, clean cut, vigorous, withal scholarly, and his snowy locks formed an agreeable frame for it. The eyes gave a rare impression of combined dignity and gentleness. People who saw him on the street compared him to a certain famous pulpit orator now one of the great majority.

The girl sprang up from the divan on which she was reclining and exclaimed, as her father came in :

"Oh, papa, are you going to deliver a lecture this afternoon?"

"Yes, dear," answered the Professor. "And what is my little girl reading? Something very serious, I imagine."

"Oh, no," was the laughing reply. "Only Shelley's Sensitive Plant. But I suppose that is serious. I was thinking, though."

"I wish some of the young men who listen to my lectures would do a little of the last," quoth Professor Sartoris, good humoredly. "But what were you thinking of? Perhaps our good young friend, Mr. Leland?"

A rosy blush and a downcast look answered the question more eloquently than words.

"No, no, my daughter," continued Prof. Sartoris,

kindly, patting her on the head. "Don't think I'm making fun of you. I am proud that you are engaged to such an estimable person. Only I don't want him to take away my little girl too soon."

Prof. Sartoris kissed his daughter gently on the forehead and she responded with an affectionate embrace. Then the old professor left the house.

Shortly after his departure a servant brought a card in to the young woman, which caused her to flush with pleasure, and tell the maid to usher the visitor, who was Arthur Leland, in immediately. After the usual ever new and ever old greetings of lovers had been exchanged, Miss Maud, with an adorable pout, reproached Leland for his long absence of almost a week.

"Darling," he protested, earnestly, "I can bring you affidavits to show you that it was not p-o-s-s-i-b-l-e for me to come before. Until a week ago I was rushing about Saratoga—Democratic State Convention, you know—at such a rate that I had hardly time to sleep a wink. When I got back a lot more work came along, and really I snatched this half hour from the time I need to prepare for a quick trip Boston way to-night. So you musn't blame me more than you can help."

"Well, Arthur," said his inamorata, "I'll forgive you this once. But, remember, sir, you must write me nice, long letters when you can't call."

This was said in such a pretty tone of authority, that Arthur promptly kissed the speaker, and then humbly promised to obey the mandate.

"Write every day," commanded Miss Maud.

"Every day," fervently repeated Leland.

"How busy you must be!" continued the young woman. "I'm sure I wouldn't like to be a reporter. And you can't always write what you want to either, can you?"

"Well," laughed Leland, "if the newspapers don't always tell the whole truth they come dangerously near it. At the Saratoga convention, for instance, it was a scene of great confusion and disorder, and the delegates were at sea in trying to fix on a candidate. That was, of course, because the *Trumpet* is a Republican organ. However, the newspapers don't dare tamper with the facts to any extent. It's only in the interpretation that they are partisan and sometimes designedly incorrect. The Democratic sheets said, 'There was a healthy freedom about the convention, which showed it was no cut-and-dried machine affair.' The truth is found between the two extremes."

"It was always my idea," said Miss Maud, thoughtfully, "that opinions and interpretations, as you call them, were expressed only on the editorial page."

"That is so far as English newspapers are concerned," replied Leland. "Over there a reporter isn't expected to have much more intelligence than the man who sets up the types. He only gets the superficial dry facts and writes them in a mechanical way. Here it's different. The reporter not only gathers the news, but puts the side forward which should be emphasized in his judgment. He selects and rejects from the mass of material he has collected and is able to say to a degree what he thinks.

The editorial page in America is superseded to a large extent by the actual reports of events, from which the former is really constructed."

"Then," said Miss Maud, "the reporter is both reporter and editor, whereas the editor is only editor?"

"It is something like that," admitted Leland.

"The English newspapers at least do not contain the sensations of the American ones, do they?"

"Perhaps not."

"I suppose you intend to secure a sensation 'out Boston way,' too."

"That depends on how I find things," answered Leland, smiling. "Plymouth sea serpents are what I'm after. If there is much corroborative testimony it will have to be a sensation. If, as I expect, every salt tells a different story, and embroiders much, there will be a chance for a humorous account. You see the advantage of the American style of journalism in this case—it makes a story either way."

The conversation fell back into the former strain of "dear and airy nothings" of so much moment to devoted lovers, and so difficult to shift upon cold paper. It would sound rather foolish, any way, if it were set down. An ancient adage says that some things are to be spoken; others to be written.

Finally Leland tore himself away, with a good deal of an effort, and was surprised to find, on consulting his timepiece, that he had spent almost an hour with his lady.

Once on the street his light heartedness rapidly

oozed away and his thoughts reverted to the awful disclosures of Dr. Jollier. He hastened down Fifth Avenue and passed hundreds of well dressed men and women—gay promenaders on that gay thoroughfare of the polite—laughing and chatting in the October sunshine, his own heart gloomy and finding no echo for the general gladness. He canvassed from every point of view the known facts, and then the solution furnished by the physician for the horrid events. When he had mentally gone over the ground once he repeated it and kept repeating it with infinite changes of the premises, but without obtaining very satisfactory results. So engrossed was he with his somber reflections that before he was aware he had walked down to Madison Square. At the intersection of Broadway he boarded a cable car and was soon whirled down to Fourth Street, from where he walked across to his apartments on the north side of Washington Square, and facing the great Memorial Arch.

His lodgings consisted of a suite of three rooms on the second floor of a three story brick house, its front nearly hidden by a luxuriant growth of ivy, in summer the habitation of innumerable twittering sparrows. In former years, a man of wealth had occupied the house, as was shown by the massive oak and mahogany furniture, the wide mosaic laid hall, and the spacious staircases. Leland's study looked out on the Square and was a commodious apartment furnished with a filled book case, a convenient writing desk, and decorated with knick-knacks and trophies of various kinds. A tennis racquet hung

above the marble mantelpiece, which boasted a French cuckoo clock, flanked on either side by photographs and press badges of colored silks. A policeman's night stick, a rifle on a pair of antlers, and numerous long pipes of foreign makes were some of the other unique and commonplace adornments of the walls. There was a comfortable divan and three or four chairs of the heavily padded, old-fashioned sort. The library went the gamut from Homer's Iliad and Montaigne's Essays to the latest paper covered novel and the *Army and Navy Register*. The size of the volumes varied as much as did the contents, from the most gigantic of books to tiny pocket editions.

Leland seated himself at his desk and resolutely banishing for the time the thoughts which haunted his mind set to work on an article he intended to finish before leaving town. He scratched away steadily with his pen hour after hour, until the mechanical bird on the mantel popped out of its retreat and said "Cuckoo!" nine times. Then, his work done, he gathered up the leaves of his manuscript from the floor, arranged them in their proper order, placed them in a drawer, locked the desk, and went out to dine at a French table d'hôte in South Fifth Avenue. Beaman, the artist, Jones, the medical expert (who was always called either by the prosecution or the defense in strange murder cases), Kenny, the bright young sculptor, Mindel, quite a successful writer of verse, and Merrill, the misanthropic, but humorous editor, were some of the host of Bohemian spirits gathered about the circular

tables of the resort. They had long since finished eating, and the restaurant at this hour resembled a historic English coffee house, where the wits of the neighborhood assembled of evenings to discuss the topics of the day, and all other subjects, and to exchange jests over their ale or wine. Leland was received with boisterous hilarity by his friends and had hard work getting away when he had dined. He managed to do so, however, and retiring to his rooms, quickly packed a small Gladstone bag for his journey.

Fifteen minutes before midnight found him at the Grand Central Depot purchasing a ticket, and when the Boston midnight express pulled out of the station he was climbing into a Pullman berth for a seven hours' sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

ENTRY IN A DIARY.

When the Express entered its Boston terminus and discharged its passengers, Leland was informed by the ticket agent that there was no train to Plymouth for an hour ; so he decided to spend the interval in a walk about the cultured Hub of the universe, now just arising from its slumber. Leaving his satchel with the accommodating baggage-master, he started up Causeway Street, and pretty soon

spied a neat looking restaurant, which bore this characteristic legend on its front :

.....
: Quick and Economical Lunch, :
: Compatible with Excellence, :
: Served Here. Traveller, Tarry ! :
:
:

The traveller did tarry, according to the injunction, long enough to invest in a cup of prime coffee, eggs, and rolls. Then he continued his walk. There was a hearty keenness to the air, which had a freshening and invigorating effect. The pedestrians, beyond a few workmen hurrying to their labors, were not to be seen ; the vehicles on the street were mostly trucks ; occasionally a horse car languidly jingled past. Outside of shops merry whistling youths were sweeping off the pavement. Boston was still sleepy, and the contrast between her dozy condition and New York at the same hour, impressed itself upon Leland. In the latter city the full roar of day had already set in.

Wandering over to a more residential section of the town, the quietness was even greater, the solemn, discreet looking houses gazing down on almost deserted streets. A policeman with an air that seemed to say, "Hush ! you will awaken somebody," was standing on a corner. Leland addressed himself to the bluecoat on the subject of the excessive solitude. The officer replied, "Yes, sir," and quoted :

“ ‘Dear God, the very houses seem asleep,
And all—and all—’ ”

“ ‘That mighty heart is lying still!’ ”

prompted Leland, thoroughly amused. Perhaps you have read ‘The Dynamiter!’ ”

The policeman blushing admitted that he had, and Leland passed on.

Without further adventures the young man returned to the railroad station and arrived in the historic town of Plymouth while the day was still young. The grizzled, nasal-voiced proprietor of the Pilgrim House, thinking that the visitor was a sight-seer, offered to provide him with a guide to the “p’int’s of int’re’st.”

“Ye would like to see the Rock afore anything else, I suppose, sir,” said he.

“What Rock?” wickedly responded the new guest.

“Oh, Lor’, sir, did ye never hear of the Rock the Pilgrim Fathers landed on!” ejaculated the old man with an unutterable expression of pain and astonishment.

“No,” said Leland, soberly. “But I have heard,” he added, “of the rock on which the Pilgrim Fathers landed.”

The hotel keeper looked somewhat relieved, but eyed Leland distrustfully.

“I came here to write a piece about the sea serpents around here,” finally remarked the young man, “The New York *Trumpet* sent me.”

“Ah, did you, sir?” responded the boniface,

brightening up. "Well, I took you for a New York editor when I first laid eyes on ye. Yes, everybody says I can tell a man by his looks right well. A New York editor, that's what I thought right away. A great city, New York, sir. I know it well. Some fine houses on Fourteenth Street, sir!"

The proprietor of the Pilgrim House rubbed his hands together pleasantly as he said this.

"When did you visit New York?" inquired the other, curiously.

"The last time—ahem!—I think was in '59!" was the uncomfortable response.

On the subject of sea serpents the hotel keeper recovered his composure and kept Leland's notebook employed with weird tales and instances for upwards of two hours. He also directed Leland to various fishermen who had encountered the monster or monsters. Each one of these worthies added to the young man's stock of information until he had obtained enough facts for a half dozen articles. Rather late in the afternoon he returned to the hotel and got a fresh start from mine host in regard to the errand of Dr. Jollier. The hotel keeper remembered a little about the "Bride of Plymouth" and had heard something of her disappearance, but he recommended Capt. Jason Rogers as a complete fount of knowledge respecting her.

Captain Rogers held the position of oracle and historian, and corresponded to the "oldest inhabitant" of interior villages. He had not followed the sea for more than a quarter century, and was a typical old salt, bronzed and shaggy haired. He lived in

a little frame house on a bluff that overlooked the restless ocean, with a spinster sister, the only relative he had left in the world. The income from a modest sum of money saved up by the captain in his voyaging days supported the couple.

Captain Rogers was sitting in a stiff backed chair, tilted on its rear legs, with his feet on the railing of the miniature piazza in front of his home, when Leland approached. He was smoking an ancient and jet black meerschaum with a long stem, and had a look of philosophic contentment on his face.

"This is Captain Rogers?" inquired Leland, respectfully addressing the old salt.

The captain withdrew the stem of his meerschaum from his mouth, and roared, hoarsely :

"That's me !"

"Well, Captain," said the young man, "my name is Arthur Leland, and I'm from New York. I am told that you are the best informed man in Plymouth and know everything that's happened here for years back."

"Right, my lad ! You're right !" chuckled the sailor, evidently much gratified. "I am the best in-formed, as you say. There's Sol Adams, who thinks he's got a longer mem'ry than I, but he ain't got a log. There's where I sail all around his bark. When his mem'ry desarts him, he's done for. When mine desarts me, I look at my log."

"I understand, Captain," said Leland. "You keep a log book, just as if you were still sailing the seas."

"Ay, that's what I do ! And the wind and the

weather for every day you'll find there for more nor twenty year back,

"By the way, Captain Rogers," said the visitor, undoing a paper covered package he had under his arm, "I happened to drop in to Silas Clark's place in town, and he showed me some Jamaica rum that he said was first-class. I told him I was going to call on you and he asked me to fetch you a bottle of it with his best compliments. Here it is."

The old sailor's eye glistened as he noted the generous proportions of the gayly labeled bottle, the rich hued contents of which gurgled musically when it was handed to him.

"Thankee, my lad!" he exclaimed, in his voice so suggestive of a deep throated fog horn. "Have some of this medicine with me Marie! Hollo, Marie!"

If Leland had expected a young and beauteous maiden to answer the bellowed call, he was disappointed. "Marie" proved to be a tall, thin featured, wiry looking woman of perhaps 45. She was Jason's spinster sister. In response to her brother's request, she opened the liquor, brought glasses, and also produced the captain's log. Then she retired into the house, without saying a word. She was evidently accustomed to the captain's having strange guests.

After a mutually pledged potation, Leland asked Capt. Rogers if he remembered the "Bride of Plymouth."

"Remember her! Why, my lad, I sailed on her! She was built right in this here town more nor thirty

years ago. I made two trips as fust mate from here to Rio on her. Ay, she was a noble ship."

Repressing his elation at this promising answer, Leland continued :

"I believe she never came back from her last voyage. When was that?"

The Captain turned over the leaves of the dog-eared and greasy covered log-book, until he came to an entry which he hoarsely read, thus :

"17th Oct. 1869.—Wind brisk, S. S. E. ; cloudy ; looks like a gale. This day ship 'Bride of Plymouth,' Captain Job Higgins, weighed for Liverpool, with a load of cod and merchandise. 1st mate, Tobias Jenkins ; 2nd mate, Samuel Blackstone ; 3rd mate, Geo. Evans ; Bo's'n, Larry Powers ; Carp'nter, J. Hicks. Able seamen, Joseph Burns, R. Works, Ed. Watrous, R. Johnson, Dan'l Craven, H'ry Marten, W. Marshall, Tim Rollins, Q. Emmett, Levi Morton, G. O'Reilly, E. Squires, D. Pearsall, Benj. Somers. Steward, John Hines. Boy, Ezra Jones. 20th Jan. 1880.—Add to above. 'Bride of Plymouth' lost with all hands on voyage to Melbourne."

"All lost, were they?" asked Leland, with assumed calmness.

"Every mother's son went to Davy Jones, and the 'Bride' was never seen agin.—Wait!" cried Captain Rogers, pouring out another drink, "now, come to think on it, Captain Higgins warn't lost because he didn't sail on the last trip. The 'Bride' was a-chartered by some one in Liverpool and another Cap'n was set aboard."

"Where is Job Higgins now?"

"Dead," replied the old mariner, "dead. So's his widdy. Died in that yellow house you went by a cable's length from here."

"Do you know what cargo the 'Bride of Plymouth' had when she sailed for Melbourne?" said Leland.

At this question, Captain Rogers looked cautiously about, as if fearing an eavesdropper, then placed a horny hand to one side of his mouth, and whispered in somewhat louder than an ordinary person's conversational tone :

"She was sup-posed to have a cargo o' nails. But I hev' heard that she carried what was wuth more nor all the nails you could put in three vessels. Rumor, rumor, mind ye, my lad, said 'twas gold. Several thousand pounds of English money, and the arithm'tic book says a pound is wuth four dollars and eighty-five cents."

A great light dawned upon the interrogator's mind and prompted him to ask the next question :

"Did you ever hear of there being a mutiny on the Bride?"

"Mutiny ! No ! Ha ! Ha !" exploded Captain Rogers, in cachinnatory spasms. "My lad, a Plymouth crew never mutinies. The word ain't in the vocabulary for 'em. In all my forty years on the sea I never knew a Plymouth sailor to mutiny. The mutineerin' cuss is ginerally a foreigner."

The unbounded faith of Captain Rogers in the Plymouth seamen did not produce a very strong effect on his questioner. Leland had lived long

enough in the age of gold to understand the ruling passion of man everywhere, whether high or low his condition.

"I should like to copy that entry," said Leland after ascertaining that he had sounded the extent of the old Captain's knowledge.

"You may copy the whole log if it's of any benefit to ye, my lad," heartily responded the other. "Ye'll find there's many a cur'us thing in it. Here, 6th June 1871, clear, no wind; Elias Parker, Cap'n of the 'Nimble Jane,' reports he sighted the 'Flying Dutchman' just off Cape Agulhas. That's the last time that bark of Satan was ever seen. Cap'n Parker told me himself, and I just put it down. The 'Nimble Jane' was wrecked and the Cap'n was the only man that got off alive. He died here a month arter his arrival."

"No doubt it's an interesting log," said the visitor, "but I guess I won't take it all down now. I see, by the way, that the 'Bride' sailed with only a crew of twenty men, all told."

"Right, my lad," replied Captain Rogers. "She was short-handed. But every one of the twenty was as good as two common sailors. When I sailed her to Maracaibo, I did it with sixteen men. There's seamanship for ye!"

Leland assented that it was, and hastily transcribed in his notebook the important entry relating to the lost ship. Then, thanking Captain Rogers, and despite his pressing invitation to eat the evening meal with him, the young man started to return to the Pilgrim House.

His way led along an eminence overlooking the sea, and darkness was just coming down. The surf below was rhythmically dashing against the granite rocks ; it was that dividing hour between day and night which is the most solemn of the twenty-four—under Nature's dome and amongst her environments. In harmony with the scene and time were Leland's thoughts. He derived a sort of gloomy satisfaction from the progress he had made in tracing the beginnings of the tragic occurrences which had lately taken place. He also experienced a taste of the fierce ardor of the professional pursuer of criminals and unraveller of mysteries. At the same time he was filled with a sense of the mountain-high difficulties which lay in the path of a successful running to earth of the scientific demon. What chance, with the slight data at hand, of finding after the lapse of years a single member of the "Bride of Plymouth's" crew, whose very interests of life perhaps, would not allow him to reveal his identity? Doubtless some were dead and the rest scattered over the broad world, existing on the proceeds of their crime ; for the possibility of the ship's having a cargo of gold gave rise to this new supposition in the young man's mind.

Leland had thought to spend the night in the ancient town, but he wished to communicate to Dr. Jollier as soon as possible what he had learned. Therefore he took an early evening train back to Boston, returning on the same express to New York by which he had left the metropolis.

CHAPTER X.

DEATH OF SERGEANT PHILLIPS.

That region in New York devoted to gayety and more or less gilded vice is known as the Tenderloin district. It is loosely bounded by Seventh and Fourth Avenues, and Fourteenth and Forty-second Streets. Within these limits are included the majority of the theatres, hotels and fashionable clubs. Gambling houses and resorts of evil name flourish as indispensable auxiliaries. A very few streets could probably be found in these confines not patrolled by the Miss Anonymas. Broadway and Sixth Avenue, and the blocks between the two thoroughfares, as well as certain squares between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, are most characteristic of this brilliant and somewhat wicked locality. Tradition relates that the name of Tenderloin was derived from a famous club so called, the chief distinction of which lay in its fine cookery of choice steaks.

Among the various advantageous posts from which one may observe the outward life and manners of the Tenderloin is the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street. Of course, this refers to the night time. There is only one view of the Tenderloin, and that is nocturnal. In the day it is not much different from any other semi-residential section.

The corner of which we speak is occupied by an

expensively fitted saloon, though rather small in size yet compensating for the lack in abundance of mirrors, plate glass and glittering lights. In the street just in front are the dark and grimy iron pillars which support the elevated railway. Every few minutes a train rattles and rumbles past with noise enough for a fast express crossing a bridge. Looking down Thirtieth Street, rather poorly illuminated, three dull-twinkling green lights proclaim the location of the police station. On the corner below us stands a much placarded "museum," where the vulgar and intoxicated are shown real and imaginary wonders for the admission price of ten cents. Up and down the Sixth Avenue pavement are promenading beardless youths, gray-haired men, some sober and some not, well dressed and ill dressed men, shuffling mendicants, brisk stepping persons of mysterious callings, flashy looking women and girls of all ages and conditions, a variegated and heterogeneous throng. Plenty of cabs are drawn up to the curbstones all about, and the drivers are bantering each other when not soliciting custom from the men and women who emerge from a fast café a door above our post. Looking towards Broadway, the endless procession appears of a slightly higher grade. It is better attired, wears more jewelry, and is more expensive. Clang! clang! and a cable car, dazzlingly lighted, rushes by, followed perhaps by a carriage or two.

But we have not noticed our neighbors on the corner. Besides a small, waxy faced fellow who is lounging against the brass railing outside the saloon, known

to his friends and to the police as an all-round thief and an opium fiend, an intoxicated old hag arguing with a cab driver, two hard-faced men carrying on a conversation in low tones, there is a party of four persons standing there. One is a compactly built man of composed and prepossessing features, with a jet black, curly moustache and hair of the same color. His derby hat is thrust back on his head, which lends to him an air of graceful negligence. His hands are in the pockets of his light overcoat, for this is October and the nights are cold. The young man next to him is of less than ordinary stature, wearing a tall silk hat and dressed wholly in black, even to his well fitting kid gloves. His face is smooth shaven. Member No. 3 of this group is twinkling eyed, of light complexion, with a small, straw colored moustache. He sports gold rimmed pincez nez glasses, and there is something studious in his look despite the impression of his eyes. The last man of the party is no other than Arthur Leland who returned from his New England trip early in the afternoon, and was immediately assigned to take care of the Tenderloin news for the *Trumpet* that evening. He had hardly time to change his traveling dress before he joined his confreres ; the other three young men are also reporters.

“Not much going on to-night, boys,” remarked he of the dark hair, who was considered as the leader of the Tenderloin newspaper men, and held the position of president of their association, the Anonymous Club.

“No, Hartley ; I don’t know when it’s been so dull

on a Thursday evening," responded the young man whose fad it was to dress in mourning. "Manager Sulkins told me there might be a good theatrical story, but I haven't seen it yet. Nothing from the hotels, either."

"Well," said the gentleman with the eye-glasses, "you know it's generally a case of calm before a storm up here. I expect we may be hustling around fit to break our necks within the next hour. By-the-way, that old cat Mme. La Salle tried to work off a stale tale on me to-night. Wanted a column story and a picture, though of course she didn't say so. I saw her in her dressing-room before the second act of 'Romeo and Juliet.' When she told it to me she made me swear by ten thousand saints I wouldn't have a line printed. Story had 'leaked out,' and she wished to 'forestall the publication!'"

"Queer," commented Hartley Thomas, musingly, "how these actresses work and lie for a few lines in a newspaper. The disease might be called Notorietiana."

A very erect, pink and white complexioned young man, who was dressed with extreme neatness and wore a prodigious chrysanthemum on his coat lapel, sauntered up to the group of reporters.

"Ah," exclaimed Leland, with mock stateliness, "here is our distinguished co-laborer, the exquisite Mr. Donovan. Salute Mr. Donovan."

The newcomer nonchalantly greeted the others.

"Where have you been, old man? Haven't seen you since yesterday," remarked Cooper, the young man in mourning clothes and high hat.

"Nowhere in particular," coolly responded Mr. Donovan, drawing a cigar from his vest pocket and clipping the end with an ivory handled knife. "New series of living pictures up the Avenue ; also the danse du ventre."

"Fake dance, isn't it?" said Thomas.

"I should ejaculate," interposed the reporter with eye-glasses. "Zarah, the Bagdad dancer—born in Cherry Hill."

"Say, fellows, before I saw you who do you think I came across?" propounded the new arrival.

"Jim the Penman?"

"No."

"Cooper's city editor with a jag on?"

"No."

"Who, then?"

"Diamond Mary," said Donovan. "She had about a thousand dollars' worth of shiners on her, or I'm no judge. Just returned from Chicago, where she said she'd found a soft mark ; some rich old duffer. She's living with him steady now and came back here for a few days because she was homesick."

"I pity her victim," remarked he of the eye-glasses, Foster, by name. "She'll get all he has and then leave him. It's her ambition to marry a European prince—will have nothing less. That's rich—the Princess Mary, alias Diamond Mary, alias the Duchess, formerly of the Tenderloin !"

"And she was sent up to the Island for ten days not two months ago," quoth Hartley Thomas. "To

change the subject, I've noticed Sergeant Phillips looking out of sorts lately—seems almost sick."

"I should think he would be," remarked Donovan, carelessly, "when he is in danger of being broken for those flim-flam payments regarding bail bonds."

"What! Sergeant Phillips a blackmailer!" ejaculated Leland in surprise. "Why, I thought if there was one honest man on the force it was he. I haven't read the papers carefully for two or three days and so I haven't seen anything about it. There was something printed, of course?"

"Oh, yes," said Thomas, "all the sheets had half column stories, Monday I think it was. His trial is up for to-morrow. The madame of a house got sore on him and complained to the Police Board. She's out of the business now, and so she isn't afraid."

"As to Phillips being honest," chimed in Foster, "I've yet to find in this town a policeman above the rank of patrolman who isn't a damned villain."

"You're a lop-eyed cynic, Foster," said Leland, pleasantly.

The theatres and other places of amusement were just beginning to discharge their patrons, as could be seen from the increased stream of people on Broadway. Some one suggested going to the station house, and the party of reporters leisurely crossed the street and walked towards the green lights.

From the direction of Seventh Avenue there suddenly burst forth a small army of street Arabs, white and black, with not a few older persons among them. The army halted before the police station and its component members swarmed about the steps,

chattered, and looked back in the direction whence they came. These self-appointed heralds of arrests gave a straggling cheer when two officers in plain clothes appeared around the corner, each with a young woman on his arm. Before the detectives reached the station the reporters had entered it and had stationed themselves two at each side of the rail fronting the sergeant's desk, so that they might better take note of the prisoners.

Sergeant Phillips was a stout, slow moving, stern sort of man, his age close to fifty years. What hair remained on his head was gray and he likewise had a sparse gray moustache. He was rather taciturn in manner and there was nothing free and easy about him, either in his relations with his superior officers or his subordinates. As he sat behind his desk with bent head slowly turning over the pages of the police blotter, he indeed appeared ill. There was a furtive look in his generally impassive gray eyes and his cheeks were very pale.

The policemen brought in the prisoners and ranged them against the railing. The first was a loudly dressed, weather beaten creature with a reckless air. She gazed about her as on familiar scenes and smiled impudently at the reporters. The other was a young girl and very plainly this was her first arrest. She sobbed violently.

The sergeant looked up mechanically and said :

“Both soliciting?”

The officers nodded.

“What do you call yourself?”

The flashily dressed young woman answered, with a little laugh.

"Oh, most anything! Julie Winters will do."

"How old are you, Julie?"

She tittered and said eighteen. The sergeant put it down "25."

"Where do you live?"

"Thirty-six West—er—no. I've forgotten, now."

"Where were you born?"

"Iceland," replied the prisoner, with a giggle.

"Your business?"

"Sir! How dare you! I'm a cook. Can't you tell it by my looks?"

The perfunctory business over, the matron came forward and led the brazen creature to a cell.

It was the turn of the other young woman, the novice, to answer the same questions. She still wept and clung feverishly to the arm of her captor.

"Stop crying and give me your name," said the sergeant, sternly.

Hardly had these words left the policeman's lips than a horrible convulsion suddenly dashed all meaning out of his face. His eyes seemed to bulge from his head. Terror leaped from them. He staggered to his feet, groaned, then emitted an indescribably fearful shriek, and fell heavily backward.

The station house was still as a grave.

For a second after the startling and awful occurrence no one moved. Arthur Leland, the first to recover himself, leaped over the railing. Sergeant Phillips in his fall had struck his head against the cabinet in which were kept the station records.

Blood was flowing freely from the wound. His upturned face, yet stamped with terror, was white as chalk. He did not seem to breathe and lay as motionless as a carved statue. Policemen and reporters crowded around.

"Send for an ambulance, somebody," cried Leland.

One of the officers rushed to the telephone a few feet away and hastily called up the New York Hospital.

Leland unloosed the sergeant's coat and took off the collar which confined his neck. While doing this a slip of paper projecting from an envelope fell from an inside pocket. The young man caught a glimpse of the concluding words. Without stopping to think he palmed the envelope with the skill of a magician and transferred it to his own pocket. It was done so cleverly that not one of those looking over his shoulder saw the act.

The stricken man was carried into the captain's room and was laid on a sofa. The ambulance surgeon came bustling in. He looked dubiously at the marble like face, then quickly applied a bottle of strong ammonia to the man's nose, chafed his hands, placed his ear over the sergeant's heart. Not a flutter of an eyelid or a movement of a muscle was there. The eyes were fixed wide open.

Sergeant Phillips was dead !

The surgeon thought heart disease was the cause, but he was not certain. An officer went out to find a coroner.

It was almost half past eleven o'clock and the re-

porters silently hurried off to write up the sudden tragedy.

On the way to the Anonymous Club, Hartley Thomas remarked :

“By George ! Leland acted just as if he were a doctor by trade. But I notice he’s turned almost as white as poor old Phillips.”

“It’s nothing,” replied the young man, controlling himself.

“God, what a face and what a terrible cry !” said Cooper, shuddering. “That’ll haunt my dreams for some nights to come, I’ll bet.”

“It was a damned nasty business,” assented Donovan. “I could stand his look but the yell broke me all up. I suppose we’ll all have front page stories now. Mystery—charges against him—did he die a natural death?—and so on. Any one got his record?”

“I have,” said Cooper ; “time of service and all.”

“All right, then. I guess we won’t have any trouble getting this in the first edition.”

An hour later the types in a dozen newspaper offices in Printing House Square were nimbly spelling out the story of Sergeant Phillips’s death.

CHAPTER XI.

DR. JOLLIER AND LELAND.

Two o'clock A. M. had just struck when the electric bell in Dr. Samuel Jollier's Waverly Place residence commenced to ring violently, as if betokening an impatient visitor. Smith, the butler and general factotum of the kitchen, was awakened by the noisy summons, but waited for awhile to see if the ill-timed caller would not depart. No, he was stubborn and rang again. Using his favorite adjuration of "Hell-damme!" Smith donned a pair of trousers and completed his costume with an old silk hat. In this emergency dress he went to the door and opened it about an inch.

"Here, man, what's the matter with you? Open that door!" said the person outside.

"What do you want?" said Smith, wondering whether the peremptory voice belonged to a policeman.

"That's none of your——never mind. Tell Dr. Jollier, Mr. Leland must see him immediately."

"Oh, sir," protested the servant, with chattering teeth, "I never woke up master at this ungodly hour before."

"Then you can do it for the first time now. And if you'll hurry up I may have an odd quarter in my pocket for you."

Equally influenced by the commanding manner of

the visitor and the promise of reward, Smith closed the portal just for precaution and ascended the stairs to his master's bedroom. Dr. Jollier was sound asleep, but, being awakened, at the mention of the visitor's name, he ordered the servant to bring Leland up at once. He was attired in a thick woolen dressing-gown when the young man entered.

"Doctor," said Leland, "I won't make any excuse for rousing you up, because it is done on a matter of extreme importance."

"Is it something connected with our conversation at Headquarters?"

"Yes."

"I feared as much."

Leland thrust his hand into the pocket where he kept his papers and drew forth an envelope. He gave it to Dr. Jollier and said in a low voice :

"Read."

The physician looked at the superscription.

"This is a letter," said he, "addressed to 'Sergeant John Phillips, West Thirtieth Street Police Station.' It is typewritten. The contents are as follows :

"Sergeant John Phillips, alias James Hicks, carpenter of the 'Bride of Plymouth' :—You doubtless know that Powers and Jenkins are dead. Cholera took the first off and heart disease—ha ! ha ! heart disease !—the other. It is your turn now to join them. Don't dodge dark corners or look behind you when you are going home late at night. Neither knife, club or pistol will harm you. These are too

simple and gross means. My weapon is ten times more deadly ; and it is *secret*. Before you are made a corpse (ten days from now) may you suffer the agonies I have suffered through you and your diabolical fellow conspirators !

“CAPTAIN MANDEVILLE.”

“And Sergeant Phillips ?—” continued Dr. Jollier gravely, fixing his eyes on the young man.

“He died at the station house less than three hours ago. It was like a flash of lightning. Oh, what a fearful sight !”

Leland buried his face in his hands. Indeed a man with no heart or spark of feeling at all might be expected to be moved by such piling on of fiendish deeds.

The self controlled chief even shared the emotion of his friend.

After a protracted silence, Leland, recovering himself, described the brief circumstances leading up to the Sergeant's tragic demise, and told how he obtained possession of the type-written letter. It was as destitute of any clue to the identity—rather, the changed identity—of the murderous writer as was the similar epistle which had doomed George Barrett. It had been mailed from the General Post-Office. The postmark was so indistinct, that the date could not be discerned.

“Of course,” said Dr. Jollier, speaking very slowly, “we cannot tell without an examination what disease this damnable Captain Mandeville, as he calls himself, employed to kill Sergeant Phillips. From the

symptoms it may have been any of a half dozen. Some poisons would act in the same way, too. But I don't think we have to deal with poison. The first thing is to get hold of that body and also do some disinfecting. God knows what frightful plague may not be let loose !"

With these words the physician advanced to a corner of the room, where stood a small closet containing a telephone instrument. He called up the Contagious Diseases Bureau and ordered a disinfecting wagon sent immediately to the West Thirtieth Street Police Station. Then, as the telephone did not connect with the station house, he rang up Police Headquarters.

"This is Dr. Jollier."

"Yes, sir ; what can I do for you ?" replied the Headquarters operator.

"You know Sergeant Phillips of the Twenty-ninth precinct died before midnight ?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, there is a suspicion some contagious disease killed him, and I have just sent one of our wagons to the station. I wish you would tell the people there not to have the body removed, if it has not been done already."

"All right, sir. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Shutting the door of the telephone closet Dr. Jollier quickly dressed himself, and a few minutes thereafter left the house accompanied by Leland. There were no upgoing cars in sight on Broadway, and the two men set out afoot at a brisk pace for

Thirtieth Street. As they passed the tall spires of Grace Church, half glistening in the cold moonlight, Leland recollected of a sudden what information he had gained from old Capt. Rogers of Plymouth. The occurrences of the last few hours had quite driven it from his head. He repeated the conversation faithfully to his companion, who listened with unwonted exterior attention. At the conclusion of the recital, Dr. Jollier, with a good deal of eagerness, said :

“ Let me see that crew’s list.”

Leland gave him his notebook.

The Doctor stopped for a moment under a street lamp and glanced through the names.

“ Ah !” he exclaimed, “ here is Tobias Jenkins, first mate ; Larry Powers, boatswain, and James Hicks, carpenter. This is like a partial key to the letter you found on the Sergeant. Jenkins was poor old George Barrett, Powers the miserable beggar ‘ Michigan,’ and Hicks, Police Sergeant Phillips. But where does Captain Mandeville come in ? Is that a fictitious name ? Job Higgins, according to this record, was captain of the ‘ Bride of Plymouth.’ ”

“ Oh, I neglected to tell you that Higgins did not command the vessel on her last voyage,” said Leland. “ Captain Rogers said the ‘ Bride ’ was chartered by an English company that put one of its own captains on board. Mandeville was probably that man.”

“ That explains it,” responded Dr. Jollier, mechanically, as he handed the notebook back to the young man.

No further conversation was had until the two turned the corner of Thirtieth Street. Then Leland remarked :

“ Doctor, I have never been much of a believer in the extraordinary, but the experiences of the last week have convinced me that there are mysteries and bizarre occurrences outside of novels. I suppose if any one were recounted these things they would only take them for a work of the imagination. This is a paradoxical kind of mystery, too. Unless some mistake has been made, we know the right names of the slayer and the slain ; something of their previous common history ; the methods of the former. We have even seen letters written by the murderer, have known the hour they were mailed, and from where. Perhaps one of us has brushed shoulders with him on the street. Yet he is as effectually hidden as if he were the inhabitant of another world.”

It is doubtful whether the physician heard these words ; he was occupied with reflections of his own.

The fumigators' wagon was standing in front of the station house, and the men were hard at work inside, when Dr. Jollier and Leland came up. Coroner Schultz had given permission to remove the body, and a Sixth Avenue undertaker was preparing to take it to his shop, when the Headquarters operator telegraphed Dr. Jollier's instructions. So the corpse remained on the sofa in the captain's room.

Dr. Jollier went in to take a look at it. There was nothing pathologically unusual in the dead man's appearance, but the face was indeed drawn into a

frightful shape. Nor did it seem the result of physical disease. The victim had simply felt his end at hand and had died before the look of fearful terror could be extinguished from his countenance. Not until the flesh rotted from the bones would those dreadful features be annihilated.

While the disinfectors plied their carbolic swabs and burnt sulphur in the improvised dead room, Dr. Jollier learned the late address of Sergeant Phillips and summoned another wagon by telephone to go there and fumigate the house. Soon the disinfecting corps finished its work at the police station and placing the body of the Sergeant in their wagon drove away. They had orders to leave it in the chief's dissecting room.

Sergeant Phillips had lived in a house in West Sixteenth Street, a not unpretentious structure which rumor said he had purchased through his unholy levyings on harlots. When the announcement that he was to be tried on blackmail charges was made, the public affected a great horror of the offender; the fact that nearly all police officers, from the highest to the lowest, fatten off vice and crime by privately licensing it was a too notorious and indefinite one to be specially regarded. Phillips was no better or worse than his fellow officials. Through long practice he had come to believe, like others, that he had a right to receive pay from women of the town for tolerance. Perhaps, after all, that hypocritical modern sentiment that we should preach honesty in open and practice its opposite in secret, pass rigorous and imbecile laws of morality and then

wink at them when they are down in the statute books, laws only useful for the purposes of blackmail—perhaps this was more to blame than any inherent depravity in Sergeant Phillips. He was married and had a daughter of sixteen. Both the wife and daughter had been paying a visit to a relative in the country for the last week and the sergeant had consequently been living alone for that time. It was, therefore, an easy matter for the disinfectors who went to his house to perform their work.

Dr. Jollier and Leland left the station house together and had the luck to catch an elevated train which carried them down to Eighth Street. Their respective homes were a short walk from there. Before the physician left Leland at the entrance to the latter's lodgings he made an engagement to meet the young man at the Contagious Diseases Bureau.

It was now close on to four o'clock in the morning and an uncommonly sharp one at that ; so neither the Doctor or the reporter were sorry to be indoors again.

CHAPTER XII.

MALLEI.

Bacteriologist Wilbur and his assistant, Dr. Clemence, had just lunched together in a Houston Street restaurant, which is equally patronized by policemen, reporters and others whose business keeps them

at Police Headquarters. They were now sitting in their workshop in a dusty loft and each was smoking a fragrant cigar before starting on the labors of the second half of the day. Wilbur was a large jawed, ponderous sort of a man who tipped the scales in the neighborhood of two hundred pounds. The assistant, a comparatively young Frenchman, who had studied under Pasteur, was medium sized in figure, very enthusiastic in his work and given more to contemplation than to talk.

"Clemence," said the chief bacteriologist, abstractedly tapping his waistcoat at its point of greatest distention, "where the devil do you think Jollier gets his odd cases for culturing? A while ago he brought us anthrax and now we've got something else; 'dangerous,' he says. Jollier can't be trying experiments. Hasn't got the time."

"You think the anthrax and the last specimen come from guinea pigs—rabbits, eh?" replied the Frenchman.

"Why, yes," said Dr. Wilbur, with an inflection of surprise. "You had charge of 'em, you know."

Dr. Clemence chuckled.

"They--were--human cultures?"

"Certain-ly."

"Damned queer, to say the least," muttered Dr. Wilbur. "Clemence, you ought to have told me this before. Jollier didn't say anything to you about them, did he?"

The assistant said not.

"Well, that last one ought to be ready now. Let's see what it is."

Dr. Clemence flung his cigar into a tin box that did duty for a spittoon and opening the doors of an oven like apparatus standing in a corner of the room, took out a glass test tube. The contents of the tube when it was placed in the incubator six hours before were colorless. Now the culture medium of Japanese moss and beef tea was specked with tiny particles a yellowish white in hue. Each speck represented a colony of millions upon millions of microbes. Removing the cotton plug, the assistant inserted a bit of platinum wire in the tube and withdrawing it just touched the point in a shallow circular saucer. To the successive application of various chemicals the cultures responded properly and the last part of the test was to place a particle of the infected medium under the lenses of a powerful microscope. Dr. Clemence did this, gazed long and earnestly through the glass, and lifting his head with a satisfied air, pronounced the word :

“Mallei.”

Dr. Wilbur got up from his seat and also looked through the microscope.

“Glanders, sure enough,” said he ; then added : “Next time I see Jollier I’ll ask him where he got it. It’s not our business to know, Clemence ; but, by the gods ! I’m curious as an old woman about this, You’re certain, though, that it’s a human culture ?”

“Oh, yes,” replied the assistant, positively. “It came, just like the other one, from the base of a man’s skull, in the back. More skin than anything else. Looked purely local. May have been an experiment on a dead subject.”

"I remember," continued Dr. Clemence, after a reflective pause, "how a bright fellow named St. Pierre, who was in my class with Pasteur six years ago, died of this very disease. His father was a rich count and disinherited him because he took to this branch of medicine. But he was very much devoted to the science and would not leave it. Monsieur Pasteur loved him as his own son. He did some wonderful laboratory work. As in every well-regulated laboratory, there were some strict rules; for example, you had always to wash your hands in disinfectants before and after handling tubes and so on. St. Pierre was a model in the observance of these rules and never broke one until one morning when he was in a great hurry. He had a slight cut in the first finger of his right hand. He went through a glanders experiment without bandaging the finger, as he should have done. Next morning he was dead."

"That was an accident," commented the chief bacteriologist, "but what are these of Jollier's?"

"Who knows?" said the Frenchman. "At any rate, I will make out our report and send it to him."

In the back room were several hutches of small animals, involuntary and unsuspecting victims to experiments with terrible diseases. The hutches were placed in a row on a shelf running along the side of the wall and elevated a couple of feet from the floor. In yonder cage was a large, white sad-eyed rabbit sitting on his haunches, his fore paws resting on the bars; a pathetic attitude. The creature seemed to realize that an unnatural agency of

death was slowly killing it. A shaven spot, inflamed like a boil, upon the right side of the rabbit, showed where the daily injection of tuberculosis was introduced. Next to this animal was a cage full of squeaking guinea pigs, that dashed back and forth, burrowed energetically in their straw carpet, and acted generally like a lot of boys just let out of school. These little beasts had not as yet been used. Right next to them, however, was a box with a solitary occupant, an almost pure white guinea pig, that had enough diphtheretic toxine in his system to kill three men. The doctors had given him a daily increasing dose of toxine for two weeks, and now the old fellow had about reached the limit of his endurance. He was feebly crawling around his cage. A tiny white bandage, like a horse's saddle band, encircled the animal's stomach. The injection place, near the spinal column, had become so sore that a bandage was necessary.

Of a sudden there was a snapping sound, some drops, a chorus of squeals and then a noise of small, pattering feet. A colony of guinea pigs had insurrected and gnawing a wooden bar until it broke they had jumped to the floor and scampered off in a dozen different directions.

"Sacre!" exclaimed Dr. Clemence, rising in horror. "Those leetle pigs have run away again." The Doctor talked pigeon-English when he was excited.

Dr. Wilbur was too bulkily endowed by nature to take part in such sport as catching escaped guinea pigs. Therefore, he calmly folded his arms and watched his assistant capture the runaways. A

good many of them had hidden behind boxes and had otherwise disposed of themselves so that it was difficult to find them all. Dr. Clemence was engaged in a heated search for three missing ones when the door of the laboratory was opened by Dr. Jollier.

"A rebellion, eh?" said the visitor, taking in the occurrence at a glance.

"Yes," replied Clemence, with returned good nature. "I suppose the little fellows wanted exercise."

"They gave you some," chuckled Dr. Wilbur coming forward.

"Exercise might do you good," retorted the assistant, whereat all three laughed.

The caller nodded to Dr. Wilbur and the two went into the latter's private office.

"Well," said Dr. Jollier, "did you find anything in the last culture I gave you?"

"If you will wait a few seconds I'll hand you a complete report," replied the other, selecting a blank from a pigeon-hole of his desk. He soon filled out the sheet and gave it to Dr. Jollier.

The chief of the Contagious Diseases Division read the laconic report and tightly compressing his lips, folded the slip of paper and pocketed it.

Dr. Wilbur had seen that lip compression before and knew it meant something serious. Nevertheless, he boldly asked:

"Doctor, do you care to say where you have obtained these cultures? I have not had anything to do with them, but Clemence tells me they are human."

After thinking a moment, Dr. Jollier replied :

"No, Wilbur, I'm afraid I can't tell you anything now. It wouldn't do any good and already there are enough persons in the secret. It's the most miserable thing I ever came across and I wish I had never heard of it myself. Some future time I may let you know all, if you then desire it. I hope you won't put any unpleasant interpretation on my refusal, Doctor."

"No, no," responded the bacteriologist, quickly. "I do not doubt that whatever the circumstances you are doing the right thing. I simply knew the cultures were out of the ordinary and was a little curious. Now that you have said the word I won't mention the subject again. The sphinx couldn't be more discreet than I."

"Glad to hear it," quoth Dr. Jollier, pleasantly, taking his departure. "Discretion nowadays is a rare gift. I wish I had more of it myself."

CHAPTER XIII.

LIVERPOOL REPORT.

When Dr. Jollier returned to his office he found a note from the chief of police requesting him to call. The day before the physician had asked the superintendent to cable the Liverpool authorities to forward immediately any information obtainable concerning

the "Bride of Plymouth." Surmising that this information had arrived, Dr. Jollier hurried across the smooth asphalted street, entered the frowning, gray marble fronted police building and nodding to the officers on duty as a sort of indifferent countersign, walked past them into the Superintendent's room.

The executive head of the great department that comprises in the neighborhood of 3,000 uniformed officers and a force of more than half a hundred keen detectives, sat behind a small imitation of a police station desk surrounded by railing. He was old. That could be seen in the slight stoop of the shoulders, the baldness of the fore part of the head, the grayness of the remaining locks. He was also vigorous and soldierly. His great drooping moustachios and uniform with its gilt buttons and many stripes, betokening long service, his sharp gray eyes—imparted to him a distinguishing air. He was the famous thief-catcher whose name all over the world was a synonym for an unrivaled Vidocq. He had lately been elevated from chief of detectives to the police superintendency.

"Guggins, see if the fire is all right in the front room," said Superintendent B——, as the Doctor entered.

At this signal a lanky, grizzly bearded man, who had been lounging in a corner, retreated noiselessly through a side door. He was an ex-sleuth, retired from active service, and his business was to see that the chief got no harm from any stranger, at the interviews of whom with the Superintendent he was always present, either in plain sight or concealed

behind a screen. This bodyguard was neither an indication of timorousness on the part of the Chief nor was it an idle precaution. The man who had sent hundreds of rogues to prison for long and short terms of years and who continually was harrassing the army of thieves and was making the metropolis an uncomfortable place for them, necessarily had fierce enemies who only desired a favorable opportunity to assassinate him. The greatest detective on earth might not be able to save himself from the unexpected bullet of a visitor. The Chief knew this and although his heart would probably not beat one stroke faster if a pair of desperadoes had revolvers aimed at his temples, he unarmed, yet he saw the wisdom of a policy of precaution and acted accordingly.

"Ah, Dr. Jollier, sit down, won't you?" said the Superintendent, cordially, drawing up a chair beside him. "Palmer of Liverpool has replied to the cable I sent for you. Here it is. You can read it for yourself."

The physician took the open envelope. The message was very brief. It ran as follows :

"No 'Bride of Plymouth' ever docked here. No ship has carried gold to Australia in thirty years. Mandeville not known. PALMER."

Dr. Jollier was staggered. Here, at a stroke, seemed to be destroyed the whole fabric of the theory which previously had appeared as correct as though it were the sworn fact. It was as if all the

blocks of a puzzle fitted except one. This so, the whole combination of blocks was manifestly wrong.

"What do you think of it?" said Dr. Jollier, handing the message to the Superintendent after he had himself read it over three times.

"Think it's Gospel truth," returned the other, promptly. "Palmer is no American detective and I have known him to do some foolish things. At the same time he's a very careful man and he never says a thing until he is ready to swear to it. Oh, you can rely on Palmer. Little cranky sometimes, but he tells the truth."

The Superintendent took out a pocket knife and began cleaning his nails, or went through the motions, for his nails did not need cleaning. Then, as if he just remembered, he said, in a soft voice:

"Why?"

The Doctor flushed.

Superintendent B——, the observer would have thought, did not notice the color, for he seemed to be gazing out of the window. The Superintendent, nevertheless, did mark the change in his visitor's countenance. He had a reputation among criminals of possessing an extraordinary visual faculty that enabled him to "see around a corner."

"You mean to say by your question that I expected a different reply?"

"Yes," murmured the Superintendent, now studying the ceiling very hard.

"Well," quoth Dr. Jollier, frankly, "I did expect a very different answer from this. I don't know how to account for what Palmer says here."

"You can depend on Palmer. If he sent this cable it's correct," returned the Chief, this time shifting his gaze to the Doctor's face.

For almost a minute the Doctor said nothing. The Superintendent employed the interval in working on his nail dressing, a never ending task.

"This is something that shouldn't get out," at length remarked Dr. Jollier, picking up his hat and drawing out his cigar case.

"Say no more. I understand," quickly said Superintendent B——. "Have one of my Cubas—no? Oh, yes, I see. Don't smoke them. Well, good-by."

The Doctor walked out.

The Superintendent pressed an electric button and Guggins loafed in.

"Guggins, you saw that Liverpool cable?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you've forgotten what it said?"

"N—o—"

"What!"

"Oh, y—e—s, certainly!"

"Well, then, keep forgetting; and tell that Sunday paper man in front that I'll see him now."

Guggins salaamed and obeyed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ATLANTIC CABLE.

The night before the events just narrated, between the hours of 7 and 8, two men might have been seen sitting at a table by themselves in a German beer garden on the lower Bowery. One was a hard featured, stubbly bearded fellow, with an insolent sort of look. He wore a cutaway coat of mixed gray, loudly striped pantaloons, and a heavy, fuzzy, slate colored overcoat. His head was topped with a black Alpine hat tilted at an angle. His appearance told that he might belong to any one of a dozen classes of men. His companion was apparently a Frenchman. At least, he had a long silky black moustache and a tiny brush of hair under the lower lip, which manner of hirsute adornment is most affected by the Gallic people. The upper half of his face was in a shadow cast by a pillar, and the man seemed contented that it should be so. A soft hat was well drawn down over his forehead and like the other he wore a great enveloping overcoat, but of dark material. His clothes could not be seen underneath. He was suave in manner, low voiced, and did not permit himself to get excited, contrary to the hard featured one, who once or twice shot an angry look from his eyes and employed some profane ejaculations loud enough to be heard three or four tables away. Although these outbreaks attracted no visible

attention the man with the moustachios was not slow to remonstrate with his companion for his rashness. The remonstrance was as quickly heeded as it was forgotten. The impetuous individual seemed to recognize some sort of superiority in the apparent Frenchman. Indeed, he addressed him as "Your Honor" and in his quieter moments marked his demeanor towards him with a resemblance to respect.

"No, Paxton, it can't be done that way," the superior was saying, decisively.

"Why not, Your Honor? The easiest way is often the best. If what you say is right the kid'll deliver it at the house about two in the morning. It's dark on that side of the street, and there're plenty of fancy stone railings to hide behind. When the kid comes along, all there is to do is to nab him—"

"Yes," interposed the other, "and one howl from him will bring ten private watchmen and five policemen on top of you."

"As to that," grimly responded Paxton, "I'd choke him so he couldn't squeal a little bit. A sand bag mightn't be out of place. Then to take the envelope from his pocket and slip in the one you give me. He comes to, isn't hurt much, feels in his pocket, message there all right, delivers it."

"How do you know they would not wait till morning?"

"Never, Your Honor. A cable like this would be delivered immediately."

The speaker looked eagerly at the Frenchman, expecting his assent.

The latter shook his head.

"You, Paxton," said he, "are a man of some cleverness. You're no ordinary cutthroat or sandbagger—although you may have been—well, never mind that. You are acknowledged to be one of the most expert telegraphers in the country. You must increase your reputation. You say it is impossible to tap a cable without it's being instantly discovered. Well, let them discover, but they will not find out the cause. The break can be repaired almost as soon as it is made. As to getting at the cable, you are burglar enough for that. You have all the necessary tools and the instrument, I believe, in your overcoat pocket. It is now fifteen minutes of eight o'clock. Start in three-quarters of an hour and you will be in time to intercept the message. I have learned that there has been a great strike of longshoremen in Liverpool to-day, and there is a banquet to the Prince of Wales and the American ambassador there to-night. So the wires will be crowded with press dispatches until quite late. Our bit of news ought to come along about half-past ten, which will mean it's about half-past two o'clock in the morning on the other side. Yes, Paxton, here's the chance of your life to do a thing never done before—tap an Atlantic cable. Why, man, it's worth going to State's prison on!"

"Your Honor may joke me," sullenly replied the telegrapher, "but it doesn't seem such a fine job to me. And if I did get tripped up, why, in order to save myself at the trial, I might mention a name or two."

The Frenchman started, almost imperceptibly.

"You do not know my name," he responded, icily, his semi-bantering manner disappearing.

Paxton impetuously leaned forward and was about to pronounce the syllables of a name, when the other suddenly whispered :

"Fool ! have you forgotten already your obligations to me ? If I wished I could this moment snuff out your miserable life without the knowledge of any one ! Do as I bid you—or take the consequences."

The telegrapher shrank back as if in affright and humbly asked pardon.

At that moment a white aproned waiter, seeing that the glasses in front of the two men were empty, came up. It was a rule of the house that an empty glass should not be permitted to stand longer than five minutes, the purchase of liquor being the only admission fee, as in other like resorts.

The self possessed individual gave the orders and the waiter moved off.

"Now, Paxton," said he, "there's no benefit in my frightening you and you can't frighten me. So we can be quits there. You know what to do. Here is the message you must substitute and here is money enough to pay you for your trouble."

The telegraph operator tucked the slip of paper into a pocket and received the roll of bills rather shamefacedly.

"Your honor is too kind," he mumbled. "I deserve to be where you found me instead of a free man. But to-night I will repay part of the debt. It

is nearly time for me to leave. When shall I see Your Honor again?"

"A week from to-day," promptly answered the Frenchman; "at this same hour and at this table. And, by-the-by, do you notice that fellow to the left watching us out of the corner of his eye? Look out for him. He may be an officer. Go first and I will follow later."

Paxton swallowed the beer remaining in his glass, lit a short pipe, and ostentatiously shaking hands with his companion, departed. The suspected detective got up also and went out after him. The Frenchman satisfied himself that no other inquisitive person was in sight and then left the place in turn. He walked down to Chatham Square and jumping into one of the cabs standing on the East Side told the jehu in loud tones to drive to a Brooklyn address.

Meanwhile the telegrapher had sauntered up the Bowery. Soon he suspected that he was really being shadowed. Adopting the simple ruse of suddenly turning a corner and then waiting for his pursuer to come up, he almost collided with the man of the beer garden. The latter, not much discomposed by the exposure, continued his chase when Paxton resumed walking. Considerably annoyed, Paxton bent his steps towards Essex Street, that hive of filthy population. The chaser kept a half a block behind. On a sudden Paxton dived into a street level hallway of a tall, overshadowing tenement house. A single gas jet shed a sickly jaundiced illumination in the hall, through which a nearly constant stream of children, women and men, jabber-

ing in Yiddish, were passing. The telegrapher darted past the mob into a house in the rear, and then through a third building, when he found himself in Ludlow Street. Without waiting to see how long it would take the man who was following to learn how he had been outwitted, Paxton hurried to the Second Avenue elevated road station at Grand Street and boarded a downtown train.

After taking the ferry to Bay Ridge, Paxton found that he was the only passenger on the Manhattan Beach train. This was not the most desirable thing, because if any after unpleasantness arose the conductor would be likely to remember the solitary traveler. But it could not be helped, and Paxton, representing himself as a native of the island by the sea, engaged in an incidental conversation with the ticket taker.

A storm of considerable violence, only a taste of which had been received inland, was raging at the Beach when Paxton alighted from the train. The sky was of an impenetrable blackness, the wind was coming in a steady sweep of cyclonic strength, alternated with sudden gusts of extra power, and the ocean was sending gigantic waves dashing up the sandy slope, which came in contact with the breakwater with thunderous collisions. It was bitterly cold and occasionally seeming handfuls of snow were cast about by an invisible personage in the severe air.

The contrast between this sandy desert ruled by howling winds and rapacious waves, and the brisk Manhattan Beach in the summer, the daily resort of

thousands of city dwellers, was very great. During the hot months the whole place was illuminated at night on a grand scale and mariners far out at sea beheld its myriads of twinkling lights as the adornment of an enchanted city. Now there was darkness everywhere, except for the hazy light thrown out a short distance by a hotel or two which was not entirely closed.

The cable hut, as the structure erected over the shore end of the immense submarine telegraph line, is called, stood nearly at the extreme eastern end of the beach, slightly elevated above the sand by piling. When it was first placed there the water was two hundred yards away. Now the spray from big rollers wet the door. The hut was a plain wooden affair, not larger than two good-sized rooms, with a window or so in it ; its clapboarded exterior painted a loud red. Above it floated the flag of the cable company. The only near-by building was a deserted hotel several hundred feet to the west.

It was supposed to be the duty of a corpulent watchman to visit the hut every hour ; on a night like this, however, that guardian of peace and property resigned his trust to the elements and betook himself to a warm corner of the kitchen of the nearest hostelry where he was known ; there, all snugly fixed, with a glass of steaming toddy in his hand, the amiable cook to converse with, what more could man or watchman want ?

Paxton appreciated the safety to his undertaking afforded by the storm, but whatever satisfaction there was on that score, it was overbalanced by the rough-

ness and discomfort of the night. Turning up the capacious collar of his overcoat, buttoning the great garment tightly about him, and pulling his hat over his ears, the telegrapher sallied forth from the depot and trudged through the sand of a path used principally by the islanders. To see more than a very few feet ahead was an impossibility; in fact, it was a dangerous matter to open the eyes at all, for clouds of sand, each particle hard and dry as a shot pellet, were ever and again swept up from the surface of the beach and dispersed with great force through the atmosphere. Paxton, however, knew every inch—or yard—of the island ground and sight was not a necessary condition to his finding the cable hut. Several times the hurricane-like wind, there being nothing in that exposed region to break its force, threatened to blow away the lone traveler, who at these critical moments discreetly laid himself down until the fury of the gust lessened. For the most part the wind seemed to roar in one giant monotone, with slight changes in volume, while the crashing of the waves was as the noise of cymbals in this mighty orchestra of nature.

After a quarter of an hour's hard struggling with the shrieking blast, Paxton arrived at the door of the cable hut, which he would have been glad to break in without any formality were it not for the instructions of his superior. So for another ten minutes he fumbled with the lock before the false key in his hand would open the portal. A hastily lighted match revealed an oil lamp standing on the table. As soon as this was lit Paxton looked at his watch

and immediately uttered a loud, profane exclamation. It was just 10 : 20 o'clock and not a moment could be safely lost.

The rays of the lamp showed a bare and rather cheerless interior ; the walls were constructed only of stout planks nailed together, which were, however, storm tight ; two sash windows were placed at opposite ends, one looking out on the wild ocean and the other on the salt meadows ; there was a small closet in a corner. One would have been deceived into believing this structure the legitimate descendant of a huge packing box, were it not for a brick pier, about two feet square, that rose waist high from the center of the floor. This pier was to assure a level place and absolute steadiness for the delicate instruments which detect faults in the submarine line. Its foundation was twenty feet below the sand, upon an immovable rock. Carelessly trailed across its top was the loop of the cable, which for a distance of two feet or so was peeled of its armor to the gutta percha covered wires. One big black end came up from an augur hole in the floor, while a smaller end departed through a similar hole a short distance away. The latter went on underground through marshes and suburbs, the streets of Brooklyn, over the Brooklyn Bridge, and so to the company's offices in Broad Street, a distance of about eleven miles. The former burrowed under the sand of the beach, went straight out to sea a mile and then turning up the coast lay along the ocean bottom, never very far out of sight of land, until Canso, Nova Scotia, was reached, an eight hundred mile submarine journey.

At Canso all messages were retransmitted through the longer section of the cable, two thousand three hundred miles, to Waterville, Ireland.

It was the short section which the man who had just entered the cable hut proposed to tap. Several jars, containing acid, zinc and copper for the generation of electricity, stood in a row on a shelf and connected with one of them were wires to form a complete battery. Paxton arranged the contents of this jar so as to immediately start the current of electricity needed for his work. Then drawing a stool up to the pier he set himself to finding out which of the four wires of the core was in use. There are such a number so that if one fails there are yet three others to fall back on. The test was to scrape off well the gutta percha for a space of six or seven inches and then to hold the pointer of an ordinary compass close to the wire. When the third steel thread had been uncovered the compass was violently affected, the needle swinging frantically in the direction of an outgoing message.

When a momentary lull was indicated by the compass Paxton dexterously cut with a pair of pincers the wire in two places about a foot apart. He then rapidly placed a telegraph instrument he had drawn from his pocket in the gap and completed the circuit by joining together the wire again. He also connected the battery with the instrument. When the next dispatch came through the operator read it as easily from the click—click, click, click—click click—click, click, click of the instrument as if it were spoken matter. Business ciphers, press dispatches,

stories of failure, success, of life and of death, the concerns of two continents, flashed back and forth over the metal strand, diving into or emerging from the depths of the sea. Liverpool news came along, but nothing addressed to the Superintendent of police. The minutes slid away until it was 11 o'clock—about 2:30 A. M. on the other side. Outside the storm was still raging, but owing to the tightness of the hut's construction the clamor did not penetrate except in a subdued, far away, uniform roar which did not in the least interfere with the ticks of the instrument.

A pause. The solitary occupant of the hut listened intently. The machine began to tick nervously. It spelled out the letters S-u-p-e-r-i-n-t-e-n-d-e-n-t B—. Before the next letter could begin Paxton had almost savagely broken the land wire connection and was writing down the message on a pad.

* * * * *

In the operators' room of the cable company a stout middle aged man was pounding energetically on his key and calling for "Q," the Canso telegrapher, to know why he had so abruptly ended. There was no reponse for two or three minutes; the circuit seemed broken. At length the sounder, evidently manipulated by another person, replied that "Q" had been taken temporarily ill and that a new man would complete the message.

"Hell!" said the fat operator to himself, taking down the dispatch, "this new man must be using a

lot of force or electricity, one or the other. Seems as if he was only about ten miles away !”

* * * * *

Paxton, as soon as he had telegraphed the counterfeit message from Chief Palmer of the Liverpool Police, skillfully restored the cut wire to its former appearance by joining it together and replacing on the outside the smooth coat of gutta percha, which he heated over the lamp to render it pliable. He covered the other wires likewise and returned the instrument to his pocket. Thus, with every trace of tampering with the cable literally covered up, the operator left the hut, locking the door behind him.

The storm had not abated and it was considerable exertion to return to the depot. No train was going to leave the Beach until morning ; a locomotive, however, had been ordered to go immediately to Long Island City. A \$5 bill, judiciously applied to the engineer, secured passage for Paxton on the locomotive. In the breast pocket of his coat was stowed away the real Liverpool dispatch.

CHAPTER XV.

DIPHTHERIA.

That week when a semi-epidemic of unusual disease fell upon the Metropolis will never be forgotten by the Board of Health officers who had to deal with it.

It was in late November, cold clear weather. According to all laws of medicine the breaking out of certain sicknesses at such a germ killing temperature was impossible; yet it came to pass. For many months thereafter the medical journals were filled with articles going to explain the wonder. Dr. Jollier, despite his close connection with the affair, never contributed to the discussion. The newspapers gave considerable space to the week's record.

An old Jew pawnbroker was the first victim. Methuselah Issac Silverstein was his full name, but his familiar title was "Ike." He was a stoop-shouldered, grizzly, sharp-eyed copy of Fagin. It is true he lacked some of the villainous opportunities of the latter. To the police he was known as a long-established "fence," and more than once had come within uncomfortable proximity to State Prison for complicity with thieves. His place was on Chatham Square. Above the narrow doorway hung the regulation three hollow tin balls, with most of the gilding worn off. The window display was not out of the ordinary. Medals of all countries, decorations, watches, pistols, daggers, opera glasses, watch chains, rings, pins, jewelry odds and ends, violins, a guitar, several harmonicas—these were the articles, dusty to a degree, piled up in rather indiscriminate array, that attracted the eyes of the passers-by.

Inside, the shop was not larger than two second-rate hotel bed-rooms, and taken up chiefly with a glass counter and show case combined. The proprietor lived, and also conducted the nefarious part of his business transactions in a rear room, access to

which was very conveniently and secretly afforded by pulling on a supposed hook screwed into the wall. It was in this double private apartment that the old Jew was stricken, and had not one of his old cronies come along and seeing the place locked effected a forcible entry, he might have given up the ghost and reposed there physically for an indefinite period of time. As it was, he gave out a feeble call for assistance, when he heard the visitor rummaging about, and the latter was guided by the voice to the dying Jew's retreat.

A doctor was called. He in turn notified the Contagious Diseases Division. Malignant diphtheria was quickly discovered to be the illness. While in a delirious condition, and just before he died at the reception hospital, where he had been taken en route for North Brother Island, Silverstein told the disjointed fragments of a weird tale, which the doctors pronounced the child of wandering reason.

"God of Isaac!" screeched the Jew, in a paroxysm, "that Frenchman is mine murderer! His eyes they pierce me like red hot needles, and he says, 'Jew, you are dead before next sun-down!' And vere vill all my beezness go? Some thief will steal it, maybe! Oh, God! Oh, God!"

Putting together these babbled pieces made it appear that a Frenchman—so he looked—had called in the evening at Silverstein's shop. Under pretense of important private business, the sale of purloined plate, the proprietor was induced to give the visitor audience in the secret room. Suddenly, while in the midst of their negotiations, the French-

man leaped at the Jew's throat and bore him to the floor. He choked him into insensibility. When the Jew recovered himself the visitor was gone. Strange to say, he had taken nothing. So robbery would not explain his queer actions. Silverstein felt stiff and sore. In the morning he was attacked by such a languor that he was unable to get up. Then the full force of the sickness came.

Dr. Jollier happened to be at the Reception Hospital shortly after the man died and heard his incoherent story repeated by a nurse. Without making any comments he carefully examined the neck of the corpse. There was nothing wrong there. Just behind the left ear, however, the doctor discovered the inflamed puncture mark which announced the diabolical murderer's work.

CHAPTER XVI.

HYDROPHOBIA.

The next case of virulent disease reported was very like the first in some respects. The proprietor of a second hand book store on lower Fourth Avenue became siezed of a very strange illness. There has never been a like instance in medical history before or since. Ebenezer Pettit was the name of the book seller, a long, lean character, dry and dusty as his own wares; a man whose face might have been

made of wood so far as expression goes ; a silent man, the average type of his class. His thoughts ? His extent of intellect ? His feelings ? His desires ? Who can answer these questions concerning a salesman of decrepit volumes ? Joseph had a comparatively easy task in interpreting the dream of King Pharaoh. Had he been asked to read the thoughts of a Fourth Avenue second hand book store keeper he might have been less willing to essay the feat.

Ebenezer Pettit had no more visible antecedents than the occupants of his shelves. Both he and they undoubtedly had an origin and growth, or decline. Neither revealed it. During sleeping hours he tenanted a small, bare room in a dreary, old-fashioned house, within a stone's throw of his shop. Every night for twenty years he had, sharp on the stroke of ten, closed his store and walked to this room, where he arrived at precisely 10 : 03 o'clock. He arose punctually at half past seven, both summer and winter alike. Three times a week he shaved himself. He prepared chocolate for his breakfast over the gas jet in his room. At noon he had a sandwich and made tea over the gas jet in his shop. At 6 : 30 he dined frugally in a third-rate restaurant across the street. The monthly rent for the apartment in which he slept, was always found by his landlady, the day before it fell due, in the emptied water pitcher. Twelve years ago he failed to empty the pitcher before putting in the rent. A two dollar bill got wet. He never repeated the mistake. His landlady saw his face but a half dozen times in the whole period of his tenantry.

Thursday Morning had just entered Ebenezer Pettit's shop. Thursday Morning was an old collector who made his appearance in that neighborhood regularly upon the forenoon of the day which designated him. He was a short, stout, bald, spectacled old gentleman, of abstracted air and trotting gait. He knew the shelf where Pettit's accessions since his last visit were kept, and straightway made for it.

"Ha ! Bless my soul ! What have we here ?" exclaimed the old gentleman, his eye lighting upon a very ancient appearing volume which the title announced contained a dissertation on "The Oriental Religions ; Especially Mohammedanism."

Thursday Morning felt quite elated when he saw upon the title page the imprint of a London publisher of the early part of the eighteenth century. Whatever the inherent merit of the work (nothing, probably) the experienced bibliophile recognized it as one valuable because it had no existing duplicate.

"Have you put a price on this ?" he asked, without removing his hungry gray eyes from the third page of the closely printed volume, whither the lively optics had raced in less than a minute.

"Ten dollars," was the terse reply of the immovable shopkeeper.

"Collector's discount ?" pursued Thursday Morning, still reading.

"That's included."

"My special discount ?"

A low, grating, disagreeable snarl, like that of a

huge mastiff disturbed at his meal, was the reply that caused Thursday Morning to drop his book in sudden alarm and jump nervously in a manner which under other circumstances might have seemed comical.

No animal of the canine species was at his heels ; the old collector assured himself of this fact. Then he quickly looked up at the shopkeeper.

The blood chilling transformation of visage that met his gaze, and the subsequent developments, are powerfully described by Thursday Morning himself in his diary :

“Never while I draw breath shall I forget my sensations of terror when I beheld the fearful change in the countenance of Ebenezer Pettit, and connected it with that inhuman sound. One second, five seconds before, and there was standing close by me a man with a well balanced mind ; erect, in full possession of all his faculties ; sensibly answering my questions ; a quiet, studious man ; almost as quiet and studious as myself. Then—in the space of five heart-beats !

“Where human features had been, I saw the dull animal face of a—dog ! Accurately, it was the repulsive face of a bull dog. Thick folds of flesh depended from about the corners of the mouth and the under lip curled over, exposing the teeth and the red, glabrous skin, from which saliva profusely dripped. A fierce, wild glare was in the bloodshot and meaningless eyes.

“How is it possible for me to picture such a thing ? There is scarcely a word in the language that can express one-tenth of the fearfulness of that sight.

The rush of mingled and conflicting emotions almost caused me to lose my senses.

“ Even while I stood shuddering, incapable of action, the Creature placed its hands, as if they were paws, on a counter, and with a low, deep-throated bark, jumped over it. A large sleek, yellow cat was curled up on a pile of unsorted books the other side of the counter. The Creature repeated its horrible snarl, and advanced on all fours towards the cat, which seemingly recognizing in the approaching monstrosity a species of its hereditary enemy, arched its back, spit, and then turning tail fled to the furthest corner of the apartment.

“ The door of the shop opened. A toddling, bright haired little girl stood on the sill with one hand on the knob ; a chubby finger in her mouth. She was a pretty little girl, and as she stood made a picture of childish innocence and demureness combined to melt the heart of even such an old curmudgeon as myself. She was, I afterwards learned, the daughter of a neighbor and had been sent to make some inquiry about a book.

“ Relinquishing its pursuit of the cat and turning to the door, the Creature saw this child, and, damnable to relate, leaped towards her, growling ; saliva still dripping from the red chops. The little girl, frightened to the extent that she was capable, seemed to be silently fascinated, like the bird by the glittering eye of the serpent. Nearer and nearer to her went the Creature. Next moment and she would have been torn to pieces.

“ When I saw the little one in such horrid danger

I happily recovered the use of my faculties and also obtained a new strength. I am fairly agile, despite my sedentary life and years ; therefore, I managed to land upon the Creature's back, bearing it flat to the floor, my arms twined about its body.

“The struggle that followed was terrific. Thus rudely made aware of my presence, the Creature snapped, barked, growled, snarled and howled. Like sounds I have heard in mad houses. We rolled all over the floor, I retaining my back hold ; sometimes underneath, sometimes on top. Had it not been for the thick cloth of my overcoat my arm had been surely badly bitten, that would have meant death. How long I fought thus I do not know, it seemed several hours ; probably it was several minutes. The little child had run away. In very good time for me a policeman, passing, heard the noise of scuffling, and the howls, and, hastily entering the shop, made the Creature insensible with a blow on the head with his club,

“Breathless, I explained to the incredulous officer as rapidly as I could what had happened. The Creature was lying on its stomach, with its face hidden. The policeman turned the body so that he could see the dreadful animal lineaments, and was convinced.

“To cut the story short—I must recollect I am writing in my diary and not for the eyes of a novel reader—the Creature was taken to a hospital, where it died at noon. Ebenezer Pettit, I consider, had died when the dog took possession of his bodily hull. Of course, the doctors said it was a kind of hydro-

phobia ; new, but explainable enough. Some of the newspapers, I hear, made quite long accounts of it, in which I was characteristically lauded for 'saving the little girl !' Modern newspapers, in my opinion, should be abolished. They are a nuisance. I never read them.

" I am sorry I lost that ' Oriental Religions.' "

The theory held by physicians in the shopkeeper's case was that he had been bitten by a mad bulldog ; the picture of the foaming-mouthed animal had been strongly fixed in his brain. When madness attacked him, the muscles of his face, in automatic response to the command of the brain, formed themselves into an imitation of the canine countenance. The vocal cords had been similarly affected.

It was an odd circumstance that the medical men were unable to find any teeth marks on the man's body. If he wasn't bitten, how did he come by hydrophobia, if such it was ? It was lamely suggested that the communication took place weeks previously, giving time for the healing of any slight wounds.

CHAPTER XVII.

SIX MEN.

Where infectious disease was communicated to more than one person was in a certain lodging house, the " Palace " by name, oddly hidden between and behind two five-story Mulberry Bend tenements, a

locality, by the way, that compares favorably (or unfavorably) with the most filthy and criminal purlieus of the English metropolis. Between the side walls of the tenement houses was a space not more than two feet in width ; this was the entrance to the "Palace." A rusty little iron gate closed the passage at eight in the morning and the gate did not open again until six o'clock at night. Looking in through the bars from the pavement outside, the view was obstructed at the end of the passage by a heap of old barrels ; the lodgers dodged around this screen and faced the rickety door of a two story brick structure—the "Palace !" Accommodation for a night, which meant a vermin infested cot and the chance of losing all personal effects, even such as trousers and shoes, by theft, cost fifteen cents in coin of the realm. An Italian, who began life as a ragman, was proprietor of the place. At times there were as many as ninety lodgers ; usually, half that number. Three-fourths of them belonged to the vagrant class, beings who inhabited the lowest groggeries by day ; who would only exert themselves to beg under close necessity ; wrecks of men : then there were shambling gaited professional mendicants, shifty eyed thieves ; a miserly Baxter Street puller-in, or individual whose business it was to drag passers-by into his employer's store ; a street salesman of cheap toys and novelties, a waiter of the neighborhood impoverished by a spree ; and other characters of divers occupations.

"Nifty Jack," a regular lodger, who, as generally known among his friends, employed his nimble

fingers to illegal advantage, had not appeared at 8 A. M., when all the guests were supposed to depart. So the clerk, a scowling visaged and muscular man, went to the apartment where the belated lodger was in his cot, and shouted :

“ Say, Nifty, don't yeh know th' rules o' dis house ? Gittoutahere quick ! ”

“ I'm sick, Slider ; that's a fact. ”

“ None o' that razzle-dazzle ! ” roared the Slider in reply. “ Gittamoveon, or I'll split yer conk ! ”

There was nothing for the unfortunate guest but to obey the clerk's admonition ; the latter did often carry out his threats. So, pale-faced and disheveled looking, even for him, Nifty Jack staggered into the street.

A doctor passing chanced to notice his countenance. Stopping, he said :

“ You look ill, man. ”

“ The way I feel, ” quoth the pickpocket, with a weak smile.

After asking a few questions, the physician told Nifty Jack to stay where he was for a short time, and got the policeman on the next corner to send for a Contagious Diseases Division ambulance.

Upon due examination by an official diagnostician, the disease of Nifty Jack was pronounced to be small-pox.

Realizing the danger from such a communicable and deadly sickness and the favorable local conditions to foster its spread, the entire Health Department, like a well drilled body of troops, expended its utmost energies to crush the enemy at a blow.

The lodging house was placed under the most rigid quarantine. Every nook and cranny of it was reached either by powerful germ killing solutions or the fumes of burning chemicals. There was an endeavor made to "round up" every man who had slept in the "Palace" within the past week. In this work the Detective Bureau was enlisted. Indeed, twenty-four hours after the discovery of the plague, only two men were unaccounted for.

One of them, a street peddler, was captured the next day in Jersey City, and brought back to the "Palace," without, of course, the formality of an extradition. The other was not found, but an isolated case of small-pox occurring a month or so afterwards in a suburban town was attributed to him.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the physicians, ten of the occupants of the quarantined house caught the infection. Six of them, including the unfortunate first attacked, soon thereafter required space in the Potter's Field. Their enfeebled and unhealthy bodies could not withstand a disease that would tax to the point of death the most vigorous mortal under the best treatment.

Thus the number of the victims of that secret assassin was increased to eleven.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DETECTIVE REAPER.

Saturday afternoon following the week of extraordinary sickness, found Arthur Leland waiting for Dr. Jollier in the latter's office. The young man had in his hand a copy of an afternoon newspaper which purported to tell the true origin of the lodging house epidemic, as obtained by one of the journal's astute employees. The staring headlines outstared the staring words. A ship from Lisbon, according to the imaginative tale, had arrived with a cargo of baled rags. These contained the infection, and the pickpocket in some unexplained way was thereby seized. Leland's lip curled a little scornfully as he read the account.

At length the chief came in. He was smoking his accustomed black cigar. The casual observer would have said there was no particular care on his mind. Beneath the calm features of the man, however, were stored profound emotions. Even physically the strain upon the indefatigable Doctor, who had slept little during the late siege, was very great.

"Leland," said Dr. Jollier, removing the cigar from his mouth, "I may have a small item of news for your paper pretty soon."

"Ah! Doctor; you mean to say you are on the track to discover—him?" excitedly exclaimed the young man. "And the indications—"

"Unfortunately, no," interrupted the chief, impassively. "My news is not so great as that. It is just this: Unless within the next fortnight I obtain some tangible clue towards finding the author of eleven of the most diabolical murders ever conceived, I shall place in the hands of my superior, the president of the Health Board, all the facts at my command concerning them, and also my resignation."

Pausing for a moment the speaker suddenly burst out:

"God knows, Leland, I have done what I thought was my duty in the matter! But I cannot bear to stand helpless, impotent, and see this horrible slaughter continue under my very eyes!"

Stirred by the words of the physician, Leland sat silently for a few seconds, then ejaculated:

"Eleven!"

"Yes."

"So the six men who died in the lodging house of small pox, the bookseller, and the Chatham Square pawnbroker, all—?"

"There is no doubt of it. In the lodging house case, of course, the inoculation of one man sufficed for the rest."

"No clues, then, have developed?"

"None, except in the case of the Jew, where there may be a slight one. In his delirium at the reception hospital he talked incoherently of a man, a Frenchman, who entered his shop and choked him into insensibility. When he recovered the stranger had gone. He hadn't stolen anything. The Jew was inoculated behind the ear."

"But Captain Mandeville is no Frenchman."

"I did not tell you, Leland," returned the Doctor, "of the severe blow to that theory given by the chief of the Liverpool police. The Superintendent at my request cabled to him asking about the 'Bride of Plymouth' and her captain. The reply was that no such vessel as the 'Bride of Plymouth,' nor such a man as Mandeville, was ever known there. Nor had any vessel within a score of years taken gold to Australia."

"Then how can the facts given in Captain Rogers's diary be explained? Are they false? What interest would the old man have in making such a false record? And you know, Doctor, how accurately the entry I showed you coincides in all respects touched on with the letters written by Captain Mandeville to his victims. The tattooing on the tramp 'Michigan's' arm, his having once been a sailor, Jenkins' or Barrett's recollections of the sea, and of a past life—why, this is the kind of evidence, cumulative and corroborative, upon which the existence of worlds has been demonstrated!"

"All that I have considered," replied Dr. Jollier. "I have given every advantage to the circumstances favoring the theory we at first adopted—that a ship named the 'Bride of Plymouth,' manned by American sailors, but with an English captain, Mandeville, sailed some twenty odd years ago from Liverpool; she carried gold coin and was bound for Australia; there was a mutiny, or something of the kind; at any rate, the English captain was badly treated; now, insane as he must be, he is carrying out his

terrible revenge ; has done so already on his chief mate, the boatswain, carpenter, and others. This theory, I say, I have given every advantage, gone over it time and time again ; have repeatedly changed about the hypothetical parts. Each new result has been to make it stronger. Yet here comes a cablegram which destroys everything."

"Could the cable be wrong?"

"I have thought of that possibility also. I have made inquiries which have convinced me of the genuineness of the message. The Chief of Police of Liverpool, who has a reputation of being a very careful and accurate man, undoubtedly sent it."

"What view then do you hold?" desperately asked Leland.

"I am incapable of holding any," said the chief. "If it was not for the fiendishness of this work, it would bear the palm for mystery. In none of the recent cases have I been able to find previous history calculated to shed any light upon their connection with their slayer."

There was a knock on the door and before any one could say "Come in," the tow head of a small boy was thrust through the partially opened door.

"Mr. Reaper is here, Dr. Jollier," shrilly announced the boy.

"Send him in," quoth the Doctor ; then, turning to Leland, said rapidly, in a low tone : "This is about the last string to my bow. Reaper is a detective-sergeant and he's been detailed to this office under my orders."

Detective Reaper did not belong to the French

type of sleuths, very long, thin, dried up men with carbuncle eyes and long, hawk-like noses ; neither was he of the class of unravelers of mystery encountered in five-cent literature—individuals who strut about with upturned coat collars and ever and anon cast dark, deep looks over their left shoulders. No, indeed ! He was a well-dressed, clean-shaven, jolly-faced gentleman with a development of stomach that indicated good victualling. A checked pattern cutaway, tightly buttoned, gracefully enveloped the main portion of his frame, while his nether limbs were encased in well-fitting trousers of dark hue, which terminated at patent leather shoes. A slight bit of waistcoat, of modest design, and a few links of a gold watch chain, were visible. His linen was immaculate, and the corollary to his collar with turned edges was a blue-black silk scarf in which was carelessly thrust a diamond pin. This pin, it might incidentally be remarked, was the bait that in the detective's career had sent many nimble-fingered ones to prison. Any one, even a thief, might be excused for mistaking this round-faced, twinkling-eyed, jovial personage for a successful Wall Street broker, or a happy-go-lucky commercial traveler. Nor was all this jollity assumed on the one hand ; on the other, Detective Reaper was not merely a laughing and eating animal. He was accounted, in cases where much brain was required, one of the best men at the Central Office. He had been employed there about a dozen years, and was probably something under forty.

Hat in hand, his lightish hair, almost unnoticeably

streaked with gray, parted in the middle (the prevailing style), Detective Reaper advanced into Dr. Jollier's office.

"A fine day, Chief !" sung out the visitor cheerily, shaking hands with the physician.

"So it is ; and I'm surprised that you aren't where you belong this afternoon—in the window of the Calumet or Union League."

"Ha ! ha !" laughed the detective. "They must miss me up there ; but I drop in on 'em once in a while !"

"Let me introduce Arthur Leland of the *Trumpet* to you, Reaper," said Dr. Jollier.

"Don't need it, I guess," responded the jovial one, grasping the journalist's hand. "Mr. Leland was a Headquarters reporter for a while, I believe ; and occasionally he wrote some pretty things about me, too."

"Yes," admitted Leland, smilingly, "I was stationed up here some time ago and used to meet you quite frequently, professionally and otherwise."

The detective selected a stout rocking-chair, placed his hat on the floor alongside, elegantly lifted his coat tails so as not to crease them, and sat down.

"It's a rule I have," he observed, gazing cheerfully at the others, "never to stand when I can sit ; that is, to save all my energy for the time when it shall be needed. It is often needed."

"My doctrine, too," said Dr. Jollier. "Now, as the tradesmen say, to get to business. Leland knows as much about this matter we're to discuss as I do ; in fact, he did some valuable work in the

case. You, Reaper, are, I suppose, a man with as wide an experience as any detective in the country ; wider experience than that of ninety-nine hundredths ; yet I think you'll hear something this afternoon that you never heard before, and I hope you, or any other man, may never have to hear the like again. It is now going on two months since the thing began. As I told Leland just before you came in, unless something satisfactory is discovered within a fortnight I shall resign my place."

"Does it involve murder?" gravely asked the detective, taking a notebook from his pocket.

"Yes, and more. Let me begin at the very beginning and tell minutely and in the order of occurrence everything that has happened. Where Leland had personal connection with the events he will tell that first hand, in the proper place ; he may also correct me if I make any mistake."

With such a preface Dr. Jollier commenced the shuddering recital. Detective Reaper, with the closest attention visible upon his countenance, listened, and took profuse notes, rarely interrupting to ask a vital question.

The Doctor told how the beggar "Michigan" had been mysteriously taken down with a disease which was diagnosed as Asiatic cholera ; what he had done last before being attacked ; how impossible it was to trace the source of the man's illness which very shortly killed him ; the other particulars in the mendicant's case. The conversation Banker George Barrett had had with Dr. Jollier, his dim recollections, and the letter from "Captain Mandeville" in-

forming the banker of his impending death, its fulfillment, the suspicions of the physician, how he got possession of the body, and finally discovered that a scientific demon had injected a quantity of anthrax bacteria in the unfortunate man's neck—these things were next recounted. Then Leland took up the strain by telling of his visit to the Massachusetts sea town and what old Captain Rogers had in his diary concerning the "Bride of Plymouth." After the detective had made an abstract of the entry, Leland continued with the circumstances surrounding the demise of Sergeant Phillips of the Tenderloin Police Station ; how he managed to get one of the Mandeville notes from the dying man's pocket. This, as he had the one addressed to George Barrett, the detective copied. Dr. Jollier followed with the cause of the sergeant's death, an injection of glanders bacteria : apparently Phillips was the carpenter, James Hicks, of the "Bride of Plymouth," yet, according to all the information that could be gotten, Phillips was not born within sight of water nor ever sailed on it.

"I may be able to give some enlightenment on that point," quietly remarked Detective Reaper. "Phillips was a friend of mine. Years ago we were patrolmen together. When I first knew him he had just got on the force ; bought his appointment, everybody knew. He came somewhere from the South ; New Orleans, I think. But he had only been there a few months. We became very intimate ; policemen always are, anyway. On more than one occasion Phillips referred to a bad deed in the past he had

been a party to, the mistreatment of some man. He never would tell me all the particulars, but he always seemed to regret the deed. I never tried to find out the whole story."

Dr. Jollier and Leland looked at each other. The latter exclaimed :

"You see, Doctor, there is another corroboration of our original theory !"

"Yes," assented the other, briefly, while the detective looked somewhat puzzled.

"Never mind this 'corroboration' now Reaper," said the chief; "you'll understand it when you hear all."

The Doctor went on to tell of the message asking information concerning the "Bride of Plymouth" cabled to the Liverpool authorities, and the answer. The sleuth asked many questions about the message and its reply.

Coming to the epidemic of the past week, the physician related the circumstances of the various cases.

"And now," he concluded, "you have as exact and detailed knowledge of these occurrences as Leland or I. Neither of us has missed a point in the telling as far as I know. Very early in the progress of events, in fact, just after the death of George Barrett, we deduced a rather elaborate theory. The subsequent happenings, with one prominent exception, have gone to support this hypothesis. Even now you must have formed some idea of your own upon the subject; at least you have a first impression. It might be worth while comparing it with our view."

"Well," returned Detective Reaper, thoughtfully,

pocketing his notebook filled with the mystic signs of stenographic writing, "on a matter of such importance it would be ridiculous for me to have any sort of a settled opinion without considerable thinking. I should want to sleep on it. Moreover, it is a practise of mine never to enter upon a case when I am ignorant in any of its details. Through my experience with various poisoning cases I have become quite a chemist in this way ; but my knowledge of bacteria is very small ; I must study it in your department for several days. I can, of course, give you my opinion now, but I won't promise that by to-morrow morning it won't be diametrically changed. For that matter, I have changed my opinion seven times in a week."

Accordingly the detective proceeded with an exposition of the theory he had formulated. His hearers sat amazed. When he had finished, Dr. Jollier said :

"Reaper, you've saved us the trouble of telling our idea. It's no different. But how do you reconcile that cable dispatch with the other facts? That is what makes it such a gigantic puzzle to me."

The sleuth drew forth a handsomely embossed leather cigarette case, took out a brown paper cylinder of the Spanish style, rerolled and lighted it, then deliberately replied :

"There has never been a recorded instance of a forged or substituted cablegram. That is true. At the same time, we must consider the possibilities. In sending the initial message to the cable office, in transmission, going through the hands of several

operators, in its reception, and otherwise, there were chances of tampering. Likewise with the reply. Sometimes I have an instinctive belief that a certain side of a case is right, despite strong evidence favoring another view—as now. So, while I do not say the cablegram is not genuine, yet it does not disturb in the least my present idea of things. At any rate, I shall thoroughly investigate that point.”

“Then I suppose,” said Dr. Jollier, “that you have nothing immediate to suggest?”

“Oh, yes!”

“What?”

“Advertise!”

“That sounds enigmatical.”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Detective Reaper. “It’s one of the simplest of moves. I’ll just write out a little advertisment that’ll explain itself.”

He did so, and handed it to Dr. Jollier, who audibly read it thus :

“‘BRIDE OF PLYMOUTH!’ INFORMATION WANTED!
A large estate having been willed to Tobias Jenkins, last known of as mate on the ‘Bride of Plymouth,’ from Liverpool to Melbourne, the undersigned, being executor of such estate, hereby offers a reward of \$300 for information satisfactorily establishing that the aforesaid Jenkins is either alive or dead. Applicants for this reward must call at my office, No. 132½ Second Avenue, from 10 to 12 every Wednesday and Saturday morning, for ten weeks.
JOSEPHUS JENKINS.”

"What about that address?" asked Leland.

"That's all right," responded the detective. "It's a house I have the use of whenever I want it. There's a professional friend of mine who'll change the largest room into a lawyer's office, and I can stick a sign in the window, 'Josephus Jenkins, Attorney and Counsellor-at-law.' Of course, we don't know who this will bring; at least it'll do no harm. But it's more than once I've caught rascals by advertising for them. A sort of irresistible curiosity is aroused when they see a properly worded paragraph; even though they suspect a trap they'll answer it. Then, we may get some genuine information."

It was now fast getting dark and the three men got up to end the conference.

"By-the-by," remarked Detective Reaper to the chief, "the talk this afternoon has explained an odd affair. Before daylight one morning several weeks ago I helped some one carry a coffin with a corpse in it into a house not far from here."

"Ah!" ejaculated Dr. Jollier, "then you were that drunken fellow I gave a dollar to! It speaks well for your professional discretion that with the suspicions you must have had you did not take any steps to ascertain the ins and outs of that night's work."

"Well, Doctor," was the quizzical reply, "had it been any one but yourself I don't know what I might not have done."

In three of the prominent metropolitan journals the next morning appeared the "Bride of Plymouth! Information Wanted!" advertisement. In due time several hundred thousand people read it.

CHAPTER XIX.

EPISODE OF THE SECOND AVENUE HOUSE.

Lower Second Avenue, at the time we speak of, was in a highly interesting transitory state. It had been twenty-five years before a fashionable and exclusive locality for the rich. With the growth of the city the newer arrivals in the domain of gold blessed other spots to the west and further uptown with their abodes, so that gradually there were left only the conservative old families, "with names," to sustain the failing prestige of the street. When later the river of misery called the East Side overflowed its banks and swept north, it by chance swung around this locality for a couple of dozen blocks, then continued its course, leaving unpolluted a sort of social island. But the few solid residents left didn't like this idea of a misery enclosed island; therefore, albeit reluctantly, they packed their linen and silver, and drove over to Fifth Avenue, or elsewhere. For a considerable while after the hegira the Spirit of the Avenue seemed to remain and act to prevent encroachment from all sides.

At last a humble apothecary crept in, then a profane butcher; a saloon keeper and an undertaker were natural consequents. An enterprising Hungarian conceived the idea of renting one of the stately mansions and starting a café; he did so, with eminent success. Other Hungarian cafés were es-

tablished ; in the warm months each had a little vine embowered garden in front for the delectation of the customers, who would therein sit and sip their cooling lager or wine. The gardens imparted a picturesque and semi-foreign look to the street. Some lawyers, mostly Hebrews ones, also came in and opened their offices in basements. Notwithstanding all of which—druggist, butcher, saloon keeper, café keeper, lawyer—the Avenue retained to some extent its air of decorum and refinement. Its smooth asphalted street surface seemed almost to be the object of delicate avoidment on the part of drivers of beer wagons and even the ragman appeared to lower his tones when he ventured on its genteel pavements. At night the winking gas lamps illuminated only a quiet scene and cast playful shadows on the dignified fronts of the old houses, while as from a distance the incessant low hum of the city penetrated to the listener's ears.

Number 132½, where Detective Reaper's apocryphal character, Josephus Jenkins, was supposed to live, confessed to a sturdy brown stone front set back with a row of other dwellings some dozen yards from the pavement. That it belonged to another day could be told from the largeness and massiveness of everything. The outer door was of solid oak, three or four inches thick, plainly carved, and swung on the heaviest of iron hinges. It was like a castle door. The hall was long, spacious and mosaic floored. The drawing-room, extending through the house, in which many a gay ball and party had been doubtless given, was a magnificent

apartment filled with costly furniture, handsomely carpeted, the walls hung with not unpraiseworthy works of art, and its high ceiling bearing the pleasing imprint of a decorator's imagination. Thus, untenanted, it had been the whim of the owner to leave the old mansion, just as it was in bygone times. Detective Reaper, however, in return for a valuable service, received the latch key of the house with the privilege of living in it indefinitely or using it as he chose, with the sole condition that he would displace none of the furnishing. Although the detective did not care to live in it, he did often find the mansion of service in various ways. As at present.

It was the first morning named in the advertisement for calling on "Josephus Jenkins." Crisp was the air and sunshiny the morning. The front half of the drawing room of the house was partitioned off by portieres for the occasion. The former furniture had been replaced with a bookcase stuffed with legal tomes, a roll-top writing desk, a circular table, a rusty haircloth sofa, a second-hand safe, and a number of stiff-backed office chairs. It had been originally intended that the detective should play the rôle of the lawyer, but upon consideration it was thought best that he should be secreted behind the portieres for any emergency. Dr. Jollier consented to take the part while Leland assumed the minor rôle of nephew and clerk.

Ten o'clock struck from a neighboring church steeple. A minute or so thereafter some one pulled vigorously on the bell rope. Clerk Leland answered the summons in his shirt sleeves. A wrinkled, be-

spectacled old woman, taller than the average, dressed in faded black, one hand carrying an old reticule and the other clutching a slip on which was printed the advertisement, stood before the door. In quavering tones she asked if "this" was Lawyer Jenkins's office, and being affirmatively answered, said she came in response to his published want. She was ushered in and being given a seat, began to absentmindedly gaze about the apartment. The pseudo lawyer recalled her with a brisk :

"Well, ma'am, I presume you have come here to earn that \$300 reward?"

"Yes," mumbled the old woman.

"Then you may go right ahead and tell me all you know. You needn't mind my nephew."

"When'll I get the money?"

"As soon as you give me the information I want."

"I'm pretty hungry now," returned the visitor, wiping her nose on a blue cotton handkerchief, "and I'd like to get a bite first."

"My clerk will bring in something from a restaurant."

"No," somewhat querulously answered the old creature, "I always eat at home."

At this juncture, Detective Reaper burst into the room with uproarious laughter, and, to the extreme astonishment of lawyer and clerk, snatched bonnet and wig and spectacles from the ancient caller, revealing the partially bald pate, mobile features (painted somewhat, to be sure) and shrewd eyes, of a veritable man!

"Ho ! ho ! ho !" roared the unmasker. "This is rich ! Taylor, you're the best old woman I ever saw. But I caught your voice at last !"

Confused and angry, and looking very ridiculous in his incomplete costume, Taylor stood for a moment ; then recovered from his chagrin and joined in the merriment of his associate. Dr. Jollier and Leland quickly understood how matters were, and all four laughed till their sides ached.

It seems that Taylor, another Headquarters sleuth, had seen the odd advertisement and having various suspicions of it, determined on a personal investigation. So he assumed his excellent disguise and sallied forth. He was sparring for time when exposure came. Reaper good humoredly asked him to keep any more like himself away. Detective Taylor arranged his disturbed female garb, and shaking hands all around departed.

In a quarter of an hour Caller No. 2 came along. He proved to be the representative of a detective agency and offered to "take charge of the case" for the reward. Shortly after he had been dismissed a stockily built man, with the hard look of a convict, appeared. His face did not belie him, for, as he at last managed to explain himself, with a good many mysterious nods and winks, he understood by the advertisement that the permanent absence of some individual was desired, and he wanted the job. He was undeceived and allowed to go unmolested. Reaper recognized him as a desperate criminal whose portrait was not missing from the Rogues' Gallery. Another interval elapsed and then the postman

brought two letters for "Josephus Jenkins." Both were the work of professional begging letter writers and ingenuously hinted that a portion of the reward would save the large families of the writers from death by starvation. Towards 11 o'clock a wild-eyed, lean young man entered the house. He said he needed just \$300 to perfect a flying machine that would revolutionize present methods of transportation. The young man had brought an armful of papers and plans with him, and was only with difficulty persuaded he had come to the wrong place.

"Well," remarked Dr. Jollier when the door closed behind him, "I wonder how many more such callers we're going to have. There is at least variety in them."

"Yes," said Leland, "they can all claim the distinction of being queer one way or another."

The minutes slipped away until it was a quarter of twelve. Expecting no more visitors that day the three men were about to go to luncheon together, when the door bell tinkled hesitatingly. The pseudo clerk threw off his coat which he had put on and went to answer the bell, while Dr. Jollier again seated himself at his desk and Detective Reaper dodged behind the portieres.

Something there was about the newcomer that made Leland take an involuntary inventory of his appearance. He was a bent, white-haired old man and carried a heavy walking stick with a curved handle. A long and profuse white beard and bushy, snowy eyebrows almost hid the parchment-like skin of his face. His eyes were invisible behind a pair of

exaggerated green sun-goggles. When erect he was probably of medium height ; his age seemed the downhill side of sixty. The visible dress of this antique figure consisted of a large, thick-belted overcoat, worn doe-skin trousers, an immense pair of cloth and rubber buckle overshoes, and an ancient bell top silk hat with the nape mostly brushed the wrong way.

"Young sir," said the old man, in a thin cracked voice, peering up at Leland, "is this the office of Josephus Jenkins?"

"It is ; and I'm his clerk. Mr. Jenkins will see you right away."

Leaning on his stick the old man somewhat laboriously followed his usher into the office and dropped into the first chair he came to.

"My name is Hezekiah Barnett," piped the old fellow.

"Yes. You come in answer to my advertisment?"

"My hearing is poor."

"Did—you—come—in—answer—to—my—advertisment?"

"Yaas, oh, yaas. That is it. I want the reward."

The visitor solemnly nodded his head several times, as if to emphasize his acquiescence.

"Then you know something about this relative of mine—Tobias Jenkins?"

"Yaas, oh, yaas."

Again several solemn nods.

"Where do you live?"

"In Brooklyn with my sister's folks. They don't

treat me as they ought to, but I'll leave 'em soon's I get this money."

"Well, Mr. Barnett, let's hear what you know."

"The money?"

"As soon as you earn it."

"Eh? What?"

"You'll get it as soon as you earn it, I said."

"Yaas. Well, Mister Jenkins, as I'm hard of hearing we might be nearer each other."

"All right," was the prompt reply, "we'll sit together at this round table."

Accordingly the old man rose and took a chair drawn up to the table, facing the portieres. Dr. Jollier sat within arm's length to his right, and Leland, wishing to improve the opportunity for close observation, took a seat on the old man's left, under pretense that he was to make a stenographic report of the conversation.

Detective Reaper from his hiding place had been closely studying the visitor, and was puzzled by him.

Dr. Jollier thought either the man might know something or was a mild crank.

Leland had a vague feeling there was more to the visitor than appeared.

"Y'see, it's like this," began Hezekiah Barnett in his piping voice. "My sister Jane kept a boarding house. That was five years ago and before she got a legacy from the death of an uncle in Maine. The legacy wasn't very much, and when it was turned into hard money it was still less. Anyway, it was enough, so the boarding house was given up. Well,

that's no account here. While my sister was keeping the boarding house, having nothing particular to do, I got to knowing some of the boarders pretty well. One of 'em was a sea captain. He had plenty of money and drank his toddy three times a day. Sister said he was shiftless. Well, this—what was I saying?"

"You were telling about a sea captain," said Dr. Jollier, getting interested. "What was his name?"

"His name? Yaas, it was Smith. Captain Matthew Smith."

"Describe him."

"Well, he wasn't an oldish man, or a youngish. He had a beard and was middling fat."

"And he knew Tobias Jenkins?"

"Yaas, he said they were shipmates. Whenever he drank more than five glasses of toddy at once he told me the whole story—"

The old fellow stopped for a moment to draw a snuff box from his pocket and take a good sized pinch. Leland then happened to notice, in an optical excursion, that the visitor's old-fashioned silk hat had a circular hole the size of a pencil near the top of the crown, as if burned with a hot iron.

"Well," resumed Hezekiah Barnett, "Captain Smith sailed along with Tobias Jenkins on this 'Bride of Plymouth.' She went from Liverpool to Melbourne."

"Who was her captain?"

"It don't come to me now."

"Was it an Englishman, Mandeville?"

Barnett looked up rather quickly into Dr. Jollier's face, scratched his head, and replied :

"Yaas. That was him. The 'Bride' was filled with carpets, furniture and such."

"Carpets ! Furniture ! Why, wasn't her cargo gold coin under the disguise of kegs of nails ?"

"Who told ye ?" asked the old man, curiously.

"Never mind. But didn't this Captain Smith tell you the ship carried gold ?"

"No," was the placid answer.

Just then Dr. Jollier uttered a slight exclamation, as he felt a sharp prick in his left leg near the knee.

"Only a rheumatic twinge, I guess," he replied pleasantly, to the "Hey ?" of the visitor and the look of inquiry of Leland.

"Tell us the rest," said the physician, rubbing his leg.

"Yaas. The 'Bride of Plymouth' took the carpets and furniture to Melbourne. Each man got paid off, but shipped again. On the home voyage they were shipwrecked. Both Mandeville and Jenkins were drowned."

It is doubtful which of the three listeners of these extraordinary statements was the most astonished.

"Haven't you got the story twisted ?" at length exclaimed Dr. Jollier.

"Well, Mr. Jenkins," plaintively piped the old man, "it's so long ago that I may have forgot a little. But Smith allus made a point of the drowning of Mandeville and the mate."

"Smith lied to you. Mandeville, at least, I should say is alive at this moment."

"Yaas. Maybe he is, maybe he is."

"What else did Smith tell you? Anything about a mutiny or the mistreatment of Captain Mandeville?"

"Not as I remember."

"Captain Smith, then, was at your sister's boarding house five years ago. Do you know where he went or where he is now?"

Hezekiah Barnett took another pinch of snuff before he answered :

"Yaas. He said to me in private, when he went away, that he was going to marry a wife and settle down in a house he bought up in Yonkers."

"Good !" simultaneously exclaimed the lawyer and clerk.

"And the re—"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Barnett," said Dr. Jollier, "you'll get the reward as soon as I can find Captain Smith and obtain satisfactorily from him the evidence I advertised for. You may hear from me in a few days."

"Yaas. Well, Mr. Jenkins, I did expect to get paid right off, so's I could leave my sister. But it'll be right if the money comes in a week or two."

Leland at the request of his pseudo employer took down the caller's address.

Laboriously then the old man rose to his feet with the aid of his stick. He had only unbuttoned his heavy overcoat instead of removing it during the interview. Refastening this garment, putting on his

bell top silk hat, and slightly changing the position of his goggles on his nose, the visitor was ready to depart.

"Good-morning, Mr. Barnett."

"Good-morning, sir. I hope to see you again."

There was something in the thin voice that caused Dr. Jollier to turn sharply around and say :

"Don't you think you'll see me again?"

"I hope to, sir, yaas ; but this is such a queer world ; one moment a man's alive, and the next—No offense, Mister Jenkins."

Mumbling something unintelligible, the old fellow was escorted to the door, and Leland saw him amble down the street.

The three investigators sat down together at the table, Detective Reaper taking the seat just vacated by the caller.

The Doctor and the reporter both looked at the detective. He smiled and said :

"I know ; you want me to say what I think of the old codger. Offhand I should say he told a straight story ; seems honest. Now, if we can find the self-styled Captain Smith, liar that he is, why—Hello ! What's this ?"

The detective had observed a fact which the other two had not—that the visitor kept his hands beneath the table during the entire interview. What they were there for he could not ascertain from his hiding place, but now casually feeling about his hands encountered on a sort of little shelf under the circular table a tiny white metal something, which he held up to view.

Leland and the detective gazed at it stupidly.

But Dr. Samuel Jollier turned white as falling snow. His heart seemed to freeze within him.

The tiny metal something was one of the minutest syringes used in surgery. It was, Dr. Jollier with lightning-like intuition comprehended, the tool which had a short time before pricked his leg and doubtless injected innumerable deadly agents of some awful contagious disease.

Hezekiah Barnett was none other than the vile murderer, Captain Mandeville !

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT BEFELL.

Next moment and the physician's visage had revealed the truth to his companions.

Had a thunderbolt fallen from the serene sky, split the house in twain, and snatched the breath from Dr. Jollier, all in an instant of time, their shock, unutterable astonishment and anguish could not have been greater.

It was blinding, stunning.

Many burning descriptions have been written of the feelings of men doomed to leave forever the sunshine of this earth by legal execution, the gallows, the guillotine, the garrote, the headsman's axe, by the flying wheels of ponderous express trains, by

subtle poisons, by the regulated explosion of powder or dynamite, by the assassin's knife in the dark, by the dreadful tortures of the Inquisition.

What must be the feelings of a man sentenced to death by means as certain, inevitable as the motions of the planets, secret and invisible as the agents of decay, rapid as the shutting of an eye, or slow, if need be, as the most lingering of pains? Agony sublime! To know that ten thousand, ten million, infinitesimal but magically powerful organisms are silently, incessantly, speedily, surely, preparing the body for the grave! To be unaware which one in the deadly calendar of communicable diseases it is, but to know that medicine is as water and the skill of physicians a mockery! To know not when the fearful end shall come! Torments of apprehension unspeakable!

Well might the brave soul of Dr. Jollier shudder, his cheek grow pale.

The succeeding events transpired to their actors as if in some wild dream.

Detective Reaper no sooner understood the full dread import of his discovery than he recognized wherein his duty lay. He could do nothing by staying. There was only one thing for him to do—apprehend the murderer, if possible. Without a word he grasped his hat and dashed out of the house, mentally cursing himself for his stupidity, his criminal stupidity that would cost a life, the life, moreover, of a beloved superior and friend: he cursed himself for having suggested the whole miserable business, that he had not pierced the

murderer's disguise, that he whose life-work it was to deal with such things had been so easily duped, that he should have allowed the man to depart unfollowed; and the penalty for all this! Bitter indeed were the detective's self-reproaches.

Leland, vaguely feeling that he too had contributed in some way to the calamity, sat crushed, his bowed head supported by his hands.

Dr. Jollier was the first to recover himself. He had been struck hard, very hard. But his strong spirit refused to be vanquished. Like the Old Guard of Napoleon he could die—but not surrender! At least he died while performing his duty. What better time does an honest man want?

"Leland," said the physician, gently, "I don't think my—my passing away will be immediate. If you can find a cab so as to save time we'll take this (pointing to the syringe which Detective Reaper had dropped on the table) to the laboratory, and ascertain the disease. While you are out I shall write a little something in the way of a will and a line or two to my wife and my folks, my poor old father and mother in the country. If by chance I'm not alive when you return—why, good-by—and God bless you, my boy!"

Staggering to his feet Leland wrung the Doctor's hand, while a choking sob threatened to burst forth from his silent lips.

He hastened out of the house, nerving himself for what was in hand. In the bright sunshine of the opposite pavement a gamin strolling along was merrily whistling. It seemed like the worst sacrilege!

It was a profanation, too, for the sun to shine ! The world should have been shrouded in blackest darkness.

The young man recollected that several cab drivers were wont to keep their vehicles standing on a street corner some six blocks up the Avenue. The distance was between four hundred and fifty and five hundred yards. At college Leland had been something of a sprinter and had won an occasional prize in field day races. What there was at stake then was nothing compared to now. He felt a shadow of a hope that perhaps the doctors of the Bacteriological Division, if their chief was brought to them in time, might somehow miraculously save him. Therefore he ran as he never ran before. He was not encumbered by his overcoat and sped along swiftly and lightly over the smooth pavement. His powers of locomotion seemed limitless, his legs tireless ; he felt as though he could run all day with never wearying energy. The occasional pedestrians stopped and with open-mouthed wonder saw the young man dart past them, clenched fists in front of him, chest thrown out, mouth shut, just as a professional on a cinder track. When half the fleet journey had been made a policeman was like to have interrupted it, but on second thought, and seeing no one in pursuit and that the runner was well dressed, he did not do so, presuming a doctor was required.

Exhausted from his killing gait Leland approached the cab stand. Too breathless to speak he climbed into the driver's seat of one of the vehicles and pointed in the direction from which he had come. The jehu

understood and sharply whipped up his horse. The return trip was quickly made.

Brave Dr. Jollier was writing the last of his farewell notes when the cab dashed up to the mansion. He gathered up the sheets he had written, stuffed them in his pocket, and carrying in his hand, carefully wrapped in a bit of paper, the fatal hypodermic syringe, hastened to the vehicle. Leland leaped to the ground and both got inside.

"Where to?"

"Corner of Bleecker and Mulberry. Five dollars if you're there in five minutes!"

The cabby needed no other encouragement. Incidentally, from the destination, he shrewdly guessed something important connected with Police Headquarters was on the tapis. He lashed his horse until the animal paced off as rapid a gait as could be expected from his kind and on the smoother stretches made such excellent time that the spectators thought it was a runaway. Going over Belgian blocks, however, was not like traveling on asphalt and the vehicle rattled and jolted prodigiously. Leland was reminded of a certain similar but not so melancholy drive he had had with the supposedly intoxicated banker for a companion. It was not long after that drive was finished that George Barrett had died. In this case would it be likewise?

Although the jehu did not perform the impossible feat of going twelve squares in five minutes he did so well that when the coupé stopped in front of the building in which was located the bacteriological

laboratory, Leland gave him the promised reward and told him to wait.

It was something after 1 o'clock and the bacteriologists were taking their ease and also digesting their lunches with the aid of cigars.

"Clemence," said the corpulent Dr. Wilbur lazily, "some one's coming upstairs."

"Sacre! Yes! It's an outrage," returned the assistant. "I will tell you in confidence, Doctor, I think there is a plot to overwork us."

Dr. Jollier and Leland burst into the room. The astonished bacteriologists noticed that the latter was quite agitated but that the chief bore his accustomed look of impassiveness.

"There's no time for explanation, Wilbur," said Dr. Jollier, calmly. "If you or Clemence will find out right away what kind of germs this syringe contains, I'll be obliged."

Dr. Wilbur nodded his head silently and took the package which contained the tiny instrument. He cautiously unrolled it on a glass plate, then burned the paper in the coal stove that heated the laboratory. Assuring himself that the syringe was sufficiently moist so that there was no chance of the air being contaminated with floating germs, he forced the minute piston as far as it would go, using forceps in the handling. The result was that a fraction of a drop of thin, colorless liquid appeared on the end of the nozzle. The ordinary method then would have been to pregnate with a speck of this liquid the culture medium contents of a test tube and place the tube in an oven where the heat of the human body

was maintained, until, after several hours, the bacilli had bred many generations and so vastly increased that their study and classification would be a comparatively easy matter. However, as greater dispatch was necessary, the only thing to be done was to revive them well before submitting them to microscopic examination. So Dr. Wilbur, lightly touching with the end of a platinum wire, previously purified in the flame of an alcohol lamp, the fractional drop, by similar touching transferred several thousand of the organisms to the center of a piece of glass a half inch square. This was placed in the oven or incubator for a few minutes. Then Dr. Wilbur and his assistant busied themselves to clean and arrange for the test the larger of two microscopes, one with a power of 1,000 diameters.

Dr. Jollier had meanwhile dropped into a chair, and he quietly watched the swift work of the bacteriologists. He was reconciled to what fate might bring him. Perhaps his feelings partook something of the nature of that final calm with which all stout-hearted men face death. Leland anxiously gazed upon his features, dreading with an awful fear the developments of the next few moments.

Dr. Wilbur realized something serious had happened. In the light of the cultures the chief had been having made and his reticence concerning them, Dr. Wilbur pieced out for himself the shadow of the truth. He thought Leland might have, in the course of Dr. Jollier's private experiments, been accidentally inoculated with some doubtful disease. Dr. Clemence, perhaps, made various mental guesses.

He perhaps also believed that if an accident had occurred to any one it was to Leland, judging from the young man's agitation.

Lying on a small dissecting slab in a window alcove, surrounded by a litter of bottles, test-tubes, knives, pincers and other instruments, was the dead body of a guinea pig. The little creature had been tied backwards by its four feet to the slab. There was a longitudinal slit extending from the chin all the way down the stomach. On one side the flap of skin was thrown over, exposing a general area of unnatural inflammation, the work of myriads of bacilli. This excessively red, in portions blue black, flesh became a nauseating sight to Leland, within whose line of vision the body was. He moved his chair to avoid the spectacle.

Dr. Wilbur took out his watch, saw that nearly five minutes had elapsed since the culture had been put in the oven, and opened the door of that receptacle. Deftly taking the square of glass between his thumb and first finger he carried it to the microscope.

* * * * *

Detective Reaper, when he left the Second Avenue house, ran down to the corner below and eagerly gazed up and down the cross street for sight of a stoop-shouldered, white bearded old man. No such person was to be seen, only a grocer's boy with a basket of vegetables, and a veiled young woman. The detective hurried to the street above. Some distance away towards the East River an old fel-

low with a stick was hobbling along. The sleuth bounded after him with fierce joy and hope, caught up to him, grasped his coat collar in a vise-like grip. Alas ! The old man squirmed around in frightened surprise and Reaper saw it was a mistake. This one had a different cut beard than had the pseudo Hezekiah Barnett ; the detective made assurance doubly sure with a moderate pull and then not waiting to apologize for the liberty hastened away, leaving the old man standing on the pavement in blank astonishment.

The detective caught sight of a policeman (the same one, by the way, who had come near stopping Leland's race) and rushed up to him. Had he seen an old man, white haired, long white beard, etc., etc., etc.? Yes, certainly. An old gentleman of that description had asked the officer some few minutes ago to be directed to a cab stand ; upon being told there was one up the Avenue had started off in that direction. Thither the detective hurried with new hope. The solitary jehu found at the stand, however, said that there had been no customers in the last hour except a young man, who was recognizable to the detective as Leland. Reaper made certain the cabby was telling the truth by saying if any other than the aforesaid young man had taken a vehicle within the last fifteen minutes and had given a bonus to have that fact concealed, he, Reaper, would double the bonus to know it. The driver did not respond to this infallible test.

Evidently the murderer was a master in all the small as well as the large details of craftiness, which

was only excelled by his audacity and dexterity of disguise and action. He had apparently calculated upon being shadowed and doubtless had arranged some subtle plan of eluding his pursuer, but even when no one followed him he was none the less awake to his situation, and had cast this precautionary time-saving barrier (the pretended carriage escape) behind him. The actual mode of his complete and rapid disappearance in the hampered guise of an infirm old gentleman during broad daylight and in a semi-deserted locality was something which deserved the appellation of mystery. Had it been elsewhere in the great city, the roaring streets all about thronged with a moving, miscellaneous crowd, it would have been easy of explanation how one could be so quickly swallowed up.

A final resource suggested itself to the detective ; he would get assistance ; spread the police drag-net. Accordingly he walked into a drug store telephone station and called up the Inspector in charge of the Detective Bureau. Ten minutes after the brief conversation that ensued, this general alarm was telegraphed from Headquarters to the thirty-three police stations in the metropolis :

“Confidential Order No. 56.—The Superintendent of Police desires that through the reserves and roundsmen every patrolman on post in your precinct be immediately notified to look out for a man of this description : Age, about sixty ; stoop shouldered ; white hair and beard ; bushy white eyebrows ; green goggles ; height, about five feet eleven inches ; dress, heavy black overcoat with belt ; old fashioned

bell top high hat ; buckle cloth and rubber overshoes ; heavy, dark colored walking stick, curved handle. This is probably a disguise. Was last seen about 1 P. M. to-day at Second Avenue and Eleventh Street. Wanted for serious crimes."

Within half an hour three thousand or thereabouts policemen, from the extremity of the Battery to the scantily populated outskirt of Kingsbridge eleven miles above, were striving to apprehend the individual described in the above quoted order. The youngest probationers on the force understood the capture of this man was likely to mean promotion, and exerted themselves accordingly, while the veterans were not less vigilant. The result was that a dozen arrests were made in as many precincts in two hours ; but in all the cases the prisoners were discharged by the station house sergeants after questioning. Without doubt it was an uncomfortable afternoon for all old men who had the misfortune to be dressed a certain way and were out on the street.

After communicating with the Inspector, Detective Reaper returned with many misgivings to the mansion where he had left Dr. Jollier and Leland. He was afraid to think what might have happened in his absence. He surmised that Leland had taken the Doctor to his home. Yes, they had gone ; but a brief note said, to the bacteriological laboratory. The detective hastened there wondering.

* * * * *

He arrived in time to stand in the doorway of the laboratory and see Dr. Wilbur withdraw his eyes

from the microscope, silently allow his assistant to take a look, to hear them whisper together a moment, then to see the bacteriologist turn towards Dr. Jollier and Leland, and say :

“ This was originally a tuberculosis culture and a very thriving one ; but the bacilli are dead—died several hours ago, probably for lack of nourishment.”

Dr. Jollier was saved ! The bacilli were dead, harmless ! Twenty syringefuls of such liquid were no more than so much water !

“ Hooray ! Hooray ! Hooray ! ” shouted Detective Reaper, in a burst of unrestrained, boyish joy, dashing forward, seizing both of the Doctor’s hands and attempting to dislocate his arms by a rapid up and down movement. Then he slapped Leland a mighty slap on the back, huzzaed again, and encircling Dr. Wilbur’s fat waist attempted to boisterously execute with him a waltz across the floor.

At first Dr. Clemence, perhaps thinking a madman was loose, started to discreetly retire into the office with the intention of barricading the door, but the sight of his corpulent superior in the throes of an involuntary dance with the jolly faced stranger was too much for his sense of humor, and, doubling himself up at every spasm, he laughed heartily and loud until he grew black in the face.

Thus ridiculously enough passed a momentous crisis and occasion. It is often so.

Dr. Jollier was compelled to smile through the minute tears that glistened in the corners of his eyes, while Leland, not feeling sure whether he had bet-

ter laugh or do a supposedly less manly thing, compromised by going into the back room and swearing at the guniea pigs in the German language. Mistaking his anathemas for a promise of food they ran about in their cages and squeaked very loudly, adding to the general hubbub.

Ruffled and angry Dr. Wilbur at length tore himself loose from his jocund assailant. The jolly detective apologized profusely, deprecated his youthful spirits, and behaved so absurdly penitent, in short, that Dr. Wilbur's good humor could not fail to be restored and forgiveness was extended.

The whole bacteriological department and the three visitors shortly went out together, arm in arm, to get a drink.

CHAPTER XXI.

A TRUTHFUL CABLEGRAM.

In some way unexplained, probably from the dropping of a chance word, one of the reporters at Police Headquarters got the impression that the chief of the Contagious Diseases Division had, in the course of his work fighting the small-pox epidemic in Mulberry Street, been attacked by the disease and was in a precarious condition. This information was obtained towards 10 o'clock in the morning. It was imparted to all the Headquarters scribes who be-

longed to the discoverer's "combination," or association of co-workers.

This was the version printed in one of the journals :

"Early this morning there was a report at Police Headquarters that Dr. Samuel Jollier, Chief of the Contagious Diseases Division, is lying seriously ill of small-pox at his residence, No. 168 Waverly Place. He contracted the disease, it is said, while attending to the stamping out of the epidemic in the Mulberry Bend lodging house where six men died last week. Although the best medical skill is in attendance it is thought very probable that he cannot recover.

"Dr. Jollier was appointed Chief of the Division of Contagious Diseases several years ago, and by his energy and knowledge has brought his department to the unequaled position it now occupies in the health systems of large cities here and abroad. In administrative ability, power to cope with new and strange conditions, and a thorough acquaintance with every detail, Dr. Jollier stands foremost. Many epidemics that threatened the city have been warded off by his indefatigable labors.

"He was born in this State about thirty-five years ago, went to college and then studied medicine. He began in the Health Department as an emergency physician and worked his way up through successive steps to the office of chief. He is married.

"Personally Dr. Jollier is one of the pleasantest of men and has always had the good-will of all his associates, whether his superiors or subordinates. Lately

his friends have remarked that he seemed to be doing too much for his health."

The unlucky newsgatherers who sent to their offices this report were severely censured when its baselessness was established.

Frequently it so occurs in the newspaper world (and all the world, for that matter) that some one blunders along until he is on the very verge of a great discovery, then, by accident, or otherwise, is led away ; or is blinded by an extraneous non-essential ; or is satisfied with a substitute.

Nothing came of the general alarm for the apprehension of Hezekiah Barnett, alias Captain Mandeville. That superior murderer, in the disguise the three hunters of him saw him, had utterly vanished.

Another conference between the three was held in Dr. Jollier's office. The melodramatic episode of the Second Avenue mansion had served for one thing to tighten their bond of friendship. Moreover, each felt it a duty as he never had before to capture the monstrous slaughterer at large ; each recorded a secret vow to do the utmost in that direction.

Detective Reaper showed the others a personal cablegram he had received from a Liverpool Vidocq concerning the "Bride of Plymouth." The request and its reply Reaper managed to have transmitted over another cable line than the one over which had come the message to Superintendent B——. This was the dispatch :

"John Reaper, Central Office Detective, New

York.—The 'Bride of Plymouth' was an American vessel, Captain Job Higgins, chartered by Parker & Parker, now Parker & Smith, bankers, to take £25,000 in gold to Melbourne. She sailed on Dec. 10, 1869. Ernest Mandeville became captain. Was never spoken after the twentieth day out and was supposed to be lost. Q. REVERE."

Whatever doubts may have been entertained by any of the trio regarding the old theory were dissipated by this cable. They were now unanimous in one belief and could work together harmoniously, which was an advantage.

The anomalous position of the case was fully realized by the investigators. Here were a series of atrocious crimes, murders, being committed by a not to be accounted for fiend of science who had been seen and talked to face to face by the representatives of Justice: his original impetus to his work of death, his past history to some extent, that of some of his victims, the facts of the stolen sovereign-laden ship, the manner of the frightful deeds, indeed the whole concatenation of events,—all were clear and simple as a demonstrated algebraic problem. Had the assassin written out the entire story it could not have been much more lucid or continuous than the naturally deduced theory of the investigators. Truly it was an anomalous case and the like of it not to be found in the common annals of criminality.

Little mystery, except in details, as how came about the forgery of the cablegram, was left. All

was plain sailing. Captain Mandeville was wanted. He was the unknown—known; rather—mathematical quantity, the X.

Yet under what guise was this X to be looked for, how found?

Alas, there is no rule-book for ascertaining such information!

CHAPTER XXII.

A SILK HAT.

“DEAR ARTHUR:—A few of papa’s friends **have** been invited to dine with us next Monday evening, and I want you to come. It’s been an age anyway since you’ve called, and if you don’t make an appearance then—I may have to discipline you severely! You can’t plead ‘work’ as an excuse, because I know Monday is your day of rest. If you wish to you may wear the title of Professor for the evening’

“Your own,

“MAUD SARTORIS.

P. S. Be early.”

This note in delicate chirography on a scented sheet of thick light blue paper Arthur Leland read in his rooms with quite an agreeable little flutter of joy. It is one of the advantages of being young, that the emotions change easily, and sorrow, while for the time sharper than to accustomed years, soon flies

away and is replaced with gladness. No calamity has serious effect on youth.

Sitting down at his desk Leland briefly replied, "Of course I'll come," then, being in good spirits and the hour appropriate, he went out to join at dinner his Bohemian friends in South Fifth Avenue, who had lately seen little of him. The same jolly crew, with their lively sallies of sometimes passable wit and gayety not wholly due to wine, welcomed him. It was a very merry evening and some remarked that he was particularly bright.

In the way such things have Monday evening came around, the hour of seven, and found standing on the door step of the Sartoris residence our friend Leland, attired with all masculine adornments as beseemed a young man in his case. He was among the first arrivals and after divesting himself of his overcoat and etceteras went into the drawing-room to shake hands with Professor Sartoris and greet his inamorata.

She was the central figure of a little group of persons near the head of the room and with the aid of a plump and pleasing matron, a friend of the family, was acting as hostess. She wore a tasteful gown of light-colored material, not a little be-ribboned and be-flounced, decorously cut in the neck ; her fluffy flaxen-brown hair was prettily arranged in classic fashion ; there was a touch of rosy color in either cheek ; the blue eyes sparkled brightly. No wonder that Leland was entranced at the sight of the charming creature. By her side, erect, commanding, distinguished-looking, his long silvery curly locks and

clean cut, smooth shaven face, and powerful but benevolent eyes, forming a rare picture, stood the Professor. It was a fine sight, everybody remarked, to see Professor Ralph Sartoris and his beautiful daughter thus standing together.

"Good evening, Mr. Leland," said the hostess, sweetly, holding out her shapely little hand to the happy young man. "You have come to be almost unknown here—hasn't he, papa?"

"Yes!" heartily replied the Professor; then added, with a twinkle in his eye: "If he only knew what concern his absence has caused in a certain quarter!"

"Why, papa!" protested Miss Sartoris, blushing.

"It's all right, my dear," returned the Professor, imperturbably. "No one heard that except Mrs. Kensington. You haven't been introduced, Leland, to Mrs. Kensington, an old friend of ours, who has been so kind as to come here this evening and share the hostessship with my daughter."

Leland bowed to the lady.

"Ah!" she chirruped, "I am charmed to see such a good looking—don't blush!—live young man. As I was telling Maud, I was afraid we would be quite overwhelmed with—ahem!—fossils. Now you'll help us out, won't you, Mr. Leland?"

"I'll—I'll try," stammered the young man, observing that the Professor had not heard the disparaging remark.

"Yes," resumed the vivacious matron, "I always say the young men are the hope of the nation and dinner parties."

"Two functions!" said Leland, recovering himself. "I'm sure you're very kind!"

An interruption was occasioned by the entrance of three or four guests, dignified looking men, who had brought their wives with them.

Some of these were professors in Columbia College. It was, as Professor Sartoris himself said, a sort of informal family party. The arrival of half a dozen more guests completed the gathering. A few are worth describing. There was Dr. Cook, a short, shaggy-haired man, who, despite that he taught "Evidences of Christianity" and such, had plenty of humor in him; Professor Emmons, the eminent botanist, a tall, well dressed person with a very frank, inquiring countenance; Prof. Van Benschoten, medium sized, moustached, and with a furrowed brow caused by mathematical problems; Mr. Percival, a middle-aged ex-Broadway merchant who had miraculously quitted his chase after gold and attached himself to metaphysics and was an admirer of Prof. Sartoris; Mr. Alexander, a chubby-faced but solemn man of law; Mr. Evarts, a quiet individual whose claim to fame lay in his having been a member of an Arctic expedition party; Dr. Davis, a florid champion of theosophy; Prof. Thompson, occupant of the chair of ancient languages; and two or three others. Of the ladies were the wives of the first three named, a blooming daughter of Mr. Percival, ditto of Dr. Davis, and Mrs. Thompson. Altogether it was an interesting assemblage. The admirers of small-talk, however, would not have much favored it.

Dinner was announced. Each gentleman being ingeniously provided with a lady by shifting around the wives and daughters, the company quite cheerfully proceeded to the dining-room. Prof. Sartoris gallantly escorted Mrs. Emmons, a witty little woman with sparkling black eyes, to the table; Leland, of course, took in the hostess; while Prof. Van Benschoten had the not undesirable prospect of having the furrows removed at least temporarily from his brow by the vivacious Mrs. Kensington. The seating at the single long table was entirely at the will of the guests as they came in, everything else being likewise informal. The caterer who had charge of the affair attended to all the details, from providing mild decoration in the way of hot-house palms to cigars; so there was no hitch in the programme and all proceeded smoothly and with a minimum of trouble to the entertainers.

With the vinous accompaniment to the entree the least loquacious of the diners began to thaw out and the talk became quite spirited. Dr. Cook gave examples of his humor, another perpetrated one of those the French call *bon mots*, Mrs. Kensington kept her neighbors in a state of admiration at her sallies, Mr. Evarts began to describe life within the Arctic circle, and Leland recounted a modest anecdote that tickled the midriffs of a couple of grave professors and set them off in hearty laughter. Prof. Sartoris himself told a good natured story and otherwise entertained the company, beaming impartially on all. Miss Maud's greatest difficulty was in ward-

ing off compliments—a struggle in which her escort refused to help her !

Thus pleasantly the dinner progressed and the acme of good feeling was reached when Prof. Thompson cracked an excellent classic joke, one that had never been heard in his class room. It was almost two hours before the coffee was brought on and all that was said in that time would make a profitable book ; indeed, such a thing might be done, by the employment, say, of unseen stenographers, who could take down the speech in dialoguic form. However, many people might stop dining out if they knew their conversation was to be reported to the world. But that is an idea and problem for publishers to struggle with.

The ladies adjourned to the parlor and left the men to smoke, which they almost unanimously did. Some stronger spirits were produced, too, for those who preferred them. About this time, when the table grew a little quieter, it began to be noticed that something confidential was being discussed at the lower end, where sat Prof. Davis, who, being a Scotchman, as well as theosophist, had before him a generous bottle of the potent liquor manufactured in his native land. Dr. Davis finally rose and holding at arm's length his filled glass, his rubicund countenance expressing general satisfaction, said :

“ Gentlemen, I haven't got up to say, like many on similar occasions, that I do not propose to make a speech, because I do. [Laughter.] But my speech will be cut almost as short as the mental distance to

the moon. [Dubious laughter, not knowing what the mental distance is.] Our distinguished host, Prof. Sartoris, has not invited me to act as toastmaster, nor to respond to a toast, nor to say anything. So I stand here on my own responsibility and shoe leather. [A frown noted.] In brief, I have a pleasant bit of news to impart. To relieve your suspense, it relates to our host. [Applause.] Although I am almost a total stranger in his palace of speculation, yet I am proud to call myself his friend and rejoice in his work. Prof. Sartoris, gentlemen, I have the pleasure of announcing, is about to send to his publishers the labor of three years, manuscript of a work on Metaphysics, the pioneer of its kind in America, and which, I am told, contains many new propositions and suggestions, such as will cause it to be read by all thinking [men in this country and abroad and wherever that species exists. [Long continued applause and cries of 'Hear! Hear.']] Gentlemen, I have the honor to propose this toast, 'Prof. Sartoris and The Book ; in the name of Philosophy and his friends, long life to both !' "

The toast was drunk standing. Immediately there were calls for the Professor. He rose and said :

"My friends, I little expected to-night that such a staunch comrade as Dr. Davis would loose my poor cat from its bag. [Laughter.] But he has done it in such a flattering manner, that I almost wish I had a dozen cats—he could liberate them all so gracefully !

[Laughter and applause.] A disadvantage of this procedure is that the owner of the feline is taken unaware, especially when called upon to say something to such a gathering as this. My haunting fear has been that some of my best friends might, when they saw what I had done, become estranged from me ; so I have endeavored to keep my little secret as long as possible, and with it my friends. [Laughter.] Now that it is out I can at least say there are not half the heresies in it that Dr. Davis's remarks might lead one to imagine. Seriously, my friends, I thank you heartily for this expression of kindness, which is the more welcome because unexpected."

Amid a whirlwind of applause Professor Sartoris sat down. Several of his college confreres took occasion to personally congratulate him, while the conversation all about exclusively busied itself with the announcement of the Professor's forthcoming work, one, which all realized, must be a worthy and lasting monument to its able author. Before joining the ladies, however, Professor Sartoris extracted from the assemblage a mild general promise of secrecy concerning the book.

In the drawing-room a little entertainment was in progress. One of the young ladies, Miss Davis, was singing a Hindu song, which, though nobody knew it, recited the praises of the "star-eyed" inmates of a certain Rajah's harem. Her father explained that a quondam Hindu guest of his, a theosophical convert, traveling in this country, had taught her the song. Then some one played an impromptu on the

piano. The company had scattered about somewhat. One party of professors and their wives made up a whist quota, a number of persons surrounded the host, who, judging from their visages, was not discoursing on a very abstruse theme ; Mrs. Kensington was playfully conversing with the Arctic explorer, and Leland was enjoying a corner tete-a-tete with his fiancee.

"You men folks seemed to be having a lot of amusement after we left," said she.

"Yes," replied Leland. "It was chiefly appreciation, though, of something about your father. Dr. Davis made a bright speech and so did the Professor in reply."

"Oh, I know ! Wasn't it something about papa's book ?"

"Well, since you've guessed it the Professor's injunction to secrecy doesn't matter."

The girl laughed lightly and said :

"Oh, papa has no secrets from me, nor I from him. He has been writing the book for three or four years. When his college lectures haven't interfered he's sometimes worked in his library for whole days and nights, not even stopping for his meals. For the last two months he's been particularly busy finishing it. In a whole week I saw him only twice. I tell papa he shouldn't work so hard, but that's the only thing he won't mind me in. He says, 'Run away now, little girl ; let papa write !'"

"Have you ever see any of the manuscript ?" asked Leland, curiously.

"Oh, yes ! papa read some of it to me and it was

splendid ! But you have to think hard to understand it. It's more difficult to follow than Socrates's dialogues."

"Well," laughed Leland, "it must indeed be matter difficult of comprehension. I had small doses of metaphysics in college ; the trouble with it was for me that it involved a rigorous constant building process ; just as Euclid's twenty-fifth proposition is dependent on the first ; so if you didn't understand and know three hundred pages of the text book thoroughly, the three hundred and first was meaningless. All knowledge may be said to be acquired and stored in this way, but there are some arts and sciences that seem excessively rigid and progressively constructive. Whose fault it is I'm sure I don't know."

"Perhaps," was the reply, accompanied by a mischievous smile, "this is a wise provision that the lazy and unworthy sha'n't be able to get the benefits, but only those who have systematically and faithfully studied and remembered. By the way, Arthur, to suggest a lighter subject, what do you think I've been doing lately ?"

"Writing verses, visiting the poor, learning to cook, sewing for charity, extending your acquaintance, studying Spanish, or trying to draw harmony from a violin," glibly replied Leland.

"Guess once more."

"Let's see, what did I omit ? Is it painting ?"

"Yes. I've fixed up a sort of a studio on the second floor. If you'll come with me I'll show you

what I'm trying to paint. Our absence won't be noticed."

Leland accepted the invitation and followed his fiance to the studio, a small, cosy, well lighted apartment that offered a wide contrast to the great bare chambers, with their regulation contents of tin armor, rusty weapons of war and innumerable inanimate models of all kinds, of his professional artist friends. Two or three soft rugs of tasteful design lay on the polished wood floor, the wall paper was of light and cheerful pattern, the delicate lace window curtains were looped up with gay bands of red silk, an inviting divan with a purple and yellow flowered covering stood crossways of a corner, and there were two bamboo chairs, each tied with ribbons. On the mantelpiece were a few photographs and decorative knick-knacks. Some etchings in big gilded frames hung on the walls. The painting paraphernalia consisted of a small table on which stood a vase full of violets and an old silk hat, a palette and brush that had been evidently quickly thrown down, and a fair-sized easel holding a strip of canvas. The canvas bore a not superlatively excellent, it must be confessed, likeness of the old-fashioned headgear.

"Behold!" exclaimed the hostess, laughingly, throwing open the studio door. "Feast your eyes on this work of art! It represents the toil of many hours."

The young man's eyes fell upon the canvas and then traveled over to the model for the painting, the silk hat. It was a bell top affair, well worn, dusty to a degree, the nape wrongly brushed, and about an

inch from the top of the crown was a little round hole.

Leland had seen that hat before.

It came to him all in a flash.

That was the identical hat Hezekiah Barnett had worn !

There could be no mistake. The recognition was absolute and correct in every particular.

How came that relic of the dreadful murderer, only a few days after his last attempt at slaughter, in the house of Prof. Ralph Sartoris, serving as a model for his daughter ? How had it got there ? Was it possible that at last the capture of the terrible criminal was nigh ? Did the discovery portend harm in any way to loved ones ?

These and a hundred other quick-darting conjectures and sick fears passed through the young man's brain in a moment's time. He staggered, and leaned against the doorpost, with set, white face.

"Arthur ! What is the matter ? Are you ill ?" cried his alarmed companion, seizing his arm.

"No, no," he muttered, in a low voice. "A little dizziness. I'll sit down for a short time."

She helped him to the divan and ran for a glass of water.

When she returned, Leland had apparently recovered.

"I'm sorry to have frightened you," he said, apologetically. "Now I'll criticise your picture. Where did you find that old hat, by the way ?"

"Papa gave it to me," replied the young woman,

innocently. "It looks odd, doesn't it?—Why, you're pale again!"

"Never mind me," hastily answered Leland, looking in another direction. "It's only temporary."

He managed to soon descend to the drawing-room and taking Prof. Sartoris aside, whispered:

"Professor, I must see you privately on an important matter for a few minutes."

"Hm," said the Professor, looking surprised. "We will go into the library."

Being seated in the library, the door securely closed, Leland said:

"I will be brief. Maud asked me, Professor, a little while ago to go upstairs and see her studio. I did so. I saw there on the table an old bell top silk hat, which, by certain means, I was able to unquestionably identify. Maud said you gave her the hat. Less than a week ago that hat was worn as part of a disguise by a most fiendish murderer, who is yet at large. You recognize the gravity of the matter."

"Is that possible?" exclaimed the Professor, leaning forward horrified. "It is shocking! A murderer, you say!"

"Yes; many times a murderer."

"Well, that sounds most incredible! In explaining my possession of the hat I can be almost as brief as you were. Last Friday noon I happened to be the only person in the house. There came a ring at the door bell. I answered it. An old gentleman stood before me. As I recollect him, he was stoop-shouldered, had white hair and a white beard, goggles,

and the hat you saw. He wore a long overcoat and cloth overshoes."

"That's the man!" cried Leland.

The Professor resumed:

"He asked me if so-and-so—I forget the name—lived here. Of course I said no. Then he said he was tired and wanted to rest for a few minutes. I took him into the reception room and told him he was welcome to stay as long as he wished. I returned to my study. Half an hour later, going out in the hall, I saw the man had disappeared. I noticed his old hat on the hat rack and seeing my second best silk article gone concluded he had made an accidental exchange. Then, sometime after, as I was busy writing, my daughter found the old hat and bringing it in asked me if she might have it to paint. I said yes, without looking up. I knew that as the old gentleman had wandered into my house by accident he would not be able to find it again; so his hat was not to be returned. That is the whole circumstance."

Leland breathed a sigh of relief.

"The old gentleman did not approach you closely, did he, Professor?" he asked.

"Oh, not particularly. I did not notice carefully. Has that to do with—?"

"Yes. I might tell you all about this horrible murderer, Professor, but I would be betraying a confidence thereby and besides it would be useless. An experienced detective is now engaged in searching for him."

"Well, this is a truly remarkable occurrence," said

Prof. Sartoris, gravely. "Whoever or whatever the man may be I hope he will be apprehended. Are the prospects of arresting him favorable?"

"I think it is an even chance," returned Leland. "He is more skillful and craftier, as well as more diabolical, than any enemy of society those interested in the case ever heard of. So far he has not made a single misstep or left a clue, although he had been most audacious both in his evil deeds and otherwise. It seems that his first crimes were committed for revenge, but after that he apparently merely gratified a lust for slaughter. My connection with the terrible business, which I heartily regret, was a matter of chance."

"From what you say it must indeed be a terrible affair," said Prof. Sartoris. "Perhaps I may consider myself fortunate that nothing happened to me Friday. But what do you think brought this fellow to my house?"

"That is what has puzzled me. It is difficult to assign an object. Was that his way of changing his disguise? It may be so. Or was it merely an impulse that led him in here? Seeing no opportunity for his damnable work he went away. Was there an overcoat on the rack?"

"Yes, mine," said the Professor.

"Ah, there's another rub. If he was bent on changing his appearance, why did he not exchange overcoats also?"

"That does look strange."

"At all events, Professor," said Leland. "I won't trouble you any more with this matter. It will go

into the proper hands. I—I don't know just how to say it, but I felt awfully when I saw that indication—and—and—Maud, you know, Professor, in the same house. It made me ill for a moment when I thought of the fearful possibilities. Perhaps it would be a good idea to caution the servants against admitting any one of the old man's description. I wish I could stand on guard myself!"

"Leland," quoth the old Professor, earnestly, taking the young man's hand, "I believe you are a noble fellow; you would indeed guard my daughter, and myself, too, I have no doubt, with your life. I am proud of such a prospective son-in-law. I will adopt your suggestions of precaution and as for what you have said about this matter, it shall remain a secret with me."

Just then Miss Maud rapped on the door and the conference was abruptly terminated with a meaning handshake.

"Why, papa," exclaimed the pretty interruptor, "we all thought you and Arthur were lost! Some of our guests will be going in a few minutes. Do come down right away!"

That night, when he had returned to his lodgings and turned into bed, Leland sleeplessly tossed about thinking of the rude shock with which the pleasantness of the dinner party had been lost to him. His mind was harrassed by a thousand extravagant fears. At last he slept, but to dream. Hezekiah Barnett, the stooping, infirm, piping-voiced fiend, appeared in the house of his loved one and with diabolical designs was creeping towards her

chamber—when Leland, strong as a wild bull, filled with mad fury, rushed at his throat and with a Herculean blow knocked him backwards so that he fell to the bottom of the stairs with a terrible thud.

The thud was occasioned, unfortunately, by Leland's falling out of bed !

CHAPTER XXIII.

LELAND AND THE DETECTIVE.

Arising at 11 A. M. the next morning Leland took some lively punching bag exercise, a bed-room contrivance, then had a brisk cold shower bath and rub-down, after which he leisurely dressed himself. He looked out of his study window and saw that snow, of the fleecy kind and unaccompanied with wind, was steadily falling. Long since the black curving foot-paths that gridironed Washington Square had been obliterated and there appeared almost a snow covered plain sparsely marked with the gray trunks and branches of leafless trees, while the marble Arch seemed to lose its seriousness and solidity and be composed for the nonce of the airy descending element. The top of a maple tree was on a level with the window and perched on some of the branchlets, their wings drawn very closely about them, were a dozen or so sparrows. The snow accumulated until it was half as high as the sparrows' bodies and then,

suddenly chirruping, they flew away to find shelter under some house eave. "If I were a sparrow," thought Leland, in a quaint reverie, "my wants would surely be more simple, but—I am not a sparrow;" and thus breaking off he went out to breakfast.

Noon found the young man carelessly reading a copy of the *Trumpet* in the Central Detective office, while waiting for John Reaper, who, the sergeant in charge said, was due to appear soon. A couple of detectives were lounging against a steam radiator, smoking and gossiping. One was a long-haired, slouchy fellow, a cross, his friends said, between a college football player and a comic paper poet. The other was a self-possessed individual of gentlemanly manner and subdued appearance. Nobody ever noticed him, which was of professional advantage. He was known among his associates as The Shrinker; the first one as Baby. These two always worked together, and the journal reading public was well acquainted with them under other names.

"Well," said The Shrinker, yawning, "I see Billy the Stuff got four-and-six for that last job of his."

"So he did," replied Baby. "The Recorder's got a prejudice against that sort of work. He always soaks it to, baggers."

"Well, that's pretty near right. I say, if you must be a crook, be one and take your chances of being nabbed; but do only straight lifting and hurt nobody except in self-defense."

"Just what the Prince used to preach and practise,

And there isn't a crook in America to-day that can hold a candle to him for safe work. He was a bird."

"Oh, the devil! Baby. That's what I don't like about you; you're always praising the Prince. Who was he? Nothing but a cowardly swindler and sneak thief! He never did a decent job in his life. Now, if you're talking about—"

"Yes! I know," sarcastically interrupted the other. "There never was a man like Hobo John. He was a beauty bright!"

"Baby," said The Shrinker, solemnly, "you're my partner and I won't quarrel over this matter with you. But I'll gamble my last cent that if a vote was taken right in this office as to which was the best man at his trade, the Prince or Hobo John, the decision would be my way."

"I don't know about that!" suddenly cried the desk sergeant, leaning forward on his elbows towards the two disputants.

"There! Y'see?" exclaimed Baby, triumphantly, while The Shrinker's face fell.

Leland, interested and amused, lay down his paper and lit a cigarette. The discussion was abruptly terminated, however, by a sharp telephone ring. The sergeant stepped up to the instrument.

"Hello?—Yes. This is the Detective Bureau.—Who are you?—One Hundred and Fourth Street Station? Yes. All right.—A woman murdered, you say? Well!—All cut up and no clue, eh?—All right. A couple of the boys will be up there in half an hour.—Good-by."

Turning to the detectives the sergeant said :

"You heard about the racket. Seems to be a good case for you to distinguish yourselves in. Unless you get something you needn't report, either of you, until to-morrow."

The sleuths silently departed.

Just then Detective Reaper, rosy and smiling, bustled in. He greeted Leland gayly, nodded to the sergeant with a cheerful air, and rapidly read two letters that were in his mail-box. When he had finished Leland said :

"If you can spare ten minutes, Reaper—"

"Ten hours if you wish !" cried the other. "Fact is I haven't eaten yet ; was out until five o'clock this morning. Now there's a quiet restaurant a few blocks from here, and we can both have a bite there and also our chat."

"Agreed ; to all except the bite," said Leland. "I breakfasted some time ago, but I'll have a tooth-pick with you."

Accordingly the two men made their way to the restaurant in question. They found an unoccupied table and Reaper, after having given his order, looked inquiringly at his companion.

Leland therefore began to tell how in the Second Avenue mansion during the interview with the self-styled Hezekiah Barnett he had closely studied the caller's appearance and attire and chanced to notice in the bell-top hat a small round hole in one side.

"The devil !" exclaimed Detective Reaper, looking much mortified. "I didn't see that hole."

"Perhaps not ;" said Leland, "you couldn't from where you were."

The young man continued with his attendance at the dinner party at the house of Prof. Sartoris ; how a certain young lady (he didn't say whom) had invited him to inspect her studio.

At this point Detective Reaper became so absorbed in the narrative that he liberally sprinkled his steak with granulated sugar.

Leland described with what feelings he recognized the headgear that was serving as a model as the one belonging to the fiendish slayer. He omitted no essential (to him) details and concluded with Prof. Sartoris's explanation.

Detective Reaper got up, stamped his right foot violently on the floor, and sat down.

"What's the matter?" quoth Leland in astonishment.

"Matter?" echoed the detective, in the accents of a pitying but indignant father considering the actions of a wayward son. "Matter? It is this: Why, in the name of the crying cannibals of the Society Islands, didn't you grab that hat, borrow, beg, take, or steal it, immediately?"

"Oh, you want to examine it? I could see nothing peculiar about it. But it can be gotten easily enough this afternoon."

"No, no, it's too late," mournfully responded the detective. "If it had any marks of any kind they've been removed."

"Removed? By whom?"

"Anybody, everybody."

"But I told you the hat was left there by Hezekiah Barnett."

"Oh, that's what this Professor of yours says !"

"Reaper," said Leland, flushing angrily, "I want to understand you. You are welcome to be as familiar with me as you please. But when it concerns a friend of mine like Prof. Sartoris I won't hear the false and damnable insinuations of yourself or any other man !"

"My dear fellow," said the detective, soothingly, "you must pardon me, I am a dreadful ass. Everybody knows that. There's no one else who could commit such reckless, stupid blunders as I. You are perfectly right. I will call for the hat this afternoon. Shake hands !"

Leland was constrained to accept the invitation, though he did so grudgingly ; indeed, it was several days before he had fully forgiven the detective.

Upon leaving the restaurant the two parted, Detective Reaper going to the Professor's, while Leland took a Broadway car for the *Trumpet* office.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BELLA'S REPORT.

"So you've got bad news for me, Bella ?"

The speaker was Detective Reaper, the time the succeeding Saturday afternoon, the place a room in a little frequented third-rate family hotel in Eleventh Street, near Broadway. The one addressed was a

plump, snapping eyed brunette of excellent figure, stylishly attired, and possessing feminine dash. She was probably the wrong side of thirty-five, though that was a secret her appearance by no means revealed. Previous to her marriage to an honest, slow-going but sincerely devoted owner of a cab establishment, she had been one of those much-abused-on-the-stage adventuresses. Naturally that calling brought her into not infrequent contact with the police. She indeed experienced a change of heart when she became the mistress of the aforesaid owner's house, and gave up her evil ways ; but after the glamor, etcetera, of a married life had worn away she yearned for at least some excitement. Therefore she went to the Superintendent of Police and frankly told him of her new situation and desire ; he congratulated her on her reconciliation to society and wish to assist Justice, and sent her to the Detective Bureau. A case was immediately given to her and ever since then, which was seven years ago, she had been voluntarily donating her occasional services to the Bureau. She had got quite fascinated with the work.

"Yes, brother," said Bella, in answer to Detective Reaper's question, taking off her veil and dropping into a chair.

"Well, I just about expected it," said the detective, dejectedly. "You know I was on his track out of sight all the while you were working in sight and I couldn't find a pin's head of evidence to show that he is other than he pretends to be—a good-natured, God-fearing, honest old fellow, who cares

more for a book than a dinner any day. He told a straight story about that hat. Leland was right, as I said, and I am an ass, as I said, although at the time I was joking. The trouble with us detectives is we're too blamed suspicious. Especially myself. Think of all the time that's been wasted on this matter. Bella, sympathize with me !"

Bella laughed a mellow laugh, crossed her well-shod little feet, and said :

"I'll console you with your own maxim, That any one proved honest is one less to bother your head about ; eliminate your good characters and the single bad one will be left standing alone."

"Ah !" replied Detective Reaper, "what good are maxims when you invent them yourself? None. But anyway you might tell me your adventures."

"All right," said Bella promptly, "I'll do it—just as if I were writing a report for you. To begin : You sent for me last Tuesday night, didn't you ?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you said there was a Prof. Ralph Sartoris, living at No. — West Forty-third Street ; with his daughter, Maud, aged about twenty ; a professor in Columbia College, old, white-haired, but vigorous, and so on. He was possibly, you thought, a crazy man who has been trying to kill people by sticking poison into them through a syringe when they aren't looking. If he was such, you believed he was leading, to some extent at least, a double life. Of course to find out about that a woman was necessary ; so you got me. Well, about nine o'clock the next morning I was stationed within eyesight of the

house and saw the Professor come down the steps. As he walked across Fifth Avenue, my impression of him was just the same as your description, and you know with women impressions and intuitions are really worth something. If there was any criticism that I could possibly make it was that he walked too straight, his chest out too much and his head thrown back too far ; now that is all right in a soldier, fool or egotist ; in Prof. Sartoris—”

“Bella,” solemnly interrupted the detective, “don’t give me your nonsensical notions, but get down to business.”

“Yes, my dear, I will right away if you’ll only give me a chance ; don’t be cross. Well ! Having sized up the Professor I went out on another little job for one of the boys and got through by before 3 o’clock, when the P. was due to leave the college. My plan was all arranged beforehand and it worked to perfection. At Madsion Avenue and Forty-third Street, the northeast corner, (you know how icy it was that day) what should happen but that I slipped and fell almost under the good Professor’s nose ! Don’t laugh. I had practised and knew I did it prettily. Of course I was gallantly helped to my feet. Alas ! My ankle, my delicate, slender, handsome, little right ankle, was strained !”

“Excuse me if I wipe away a tear,” said the listener.

“Certainly, of course. It is a feeling subject, And what was to be done ? Where was I to go ? What was my address ?

“Alas ! and again alas ! I was a wealthy Mexican

lady—Senorita Isabel Don Jervais—who had just arrived in town. My sixteen trunks were at the custom house and I had hurried uptown to find an only quasi-friend, to whom I had a letter from the American Consul at Mexico City ; his former schoolmate. Who was this person ? Ah ! Yes ! Sartoris his name. Prof. Ralph Sartoris. ‘A very happy coincidence, Mademoiselle !’ exclaims my gallant helper. ‘I am Prof. Sartoris.’ What joy for the poor, injured, lost Senorita Don Jervais !”

“Joy indeed.”

“Yes. And the Professor wished the Senorita to come to his house ; but, no ; she insisted on a hotel ; wouldn’t for worlds burden his household ; other reasons, too. At length he called a passing cab (belonging to the Senorita’s husband, by the way) and Professor and Senorita went to the Waldorf. There a fine suite of rooms on the third floor was engaged and the Senorita compelled the Professor to visit her apartments and be properly thanked. Senorita threw off her rich sealskin cloak and hat and veil and let the Professor freely gaze upon her beauty. Cold man ! he asked about the Mexican Consul ; said he didn’t just remember him. Senorita soon changed the subject. Rang for some champagne. Her delicate little ankle, by the way, had recovered. Well, the champagne came. Upon the utmost urging the Professor drank a glassful. The Senorita then drew her chair quite close to him. Suddenly she became hysterical.”

“Ah !” said the detective, earnestly, “that wasn’t right. She should have been slower.”

"Oh, yes, it was! When the Senorita was in another business Rule No. 1 in her method was to employ on any and every occasion mild hysteria. When doubtful, don't know what to do next, have a hard case, or a suspicious case, mild hysteria is always in place. At any rate it is never harmful. Well, the Senorita had this attack, fell upon the Professor's neck and wept copiously; indeed she came near sobbing her little heart out. So lonesome in a strange land! How kind and noble of the dear man to help her as he did! How fortunate the meeting!

"Heart of ice! The Professor gently disengaged himself and rang for a chambermaid. Then he slipped away. The next day, of course, the Senorita called at the Professor's house to apologize for her silly weakness and the embarrassment she had given him. Our Southern emotions are so warm! She now looked lovelier than ever and was perhaps a little coy. She finally induced him to take her to the theatre that evening. At the little supper that followed in a private room in a Broadway café the Senorita tried a new tack, became real serious and womanly and surprised and delighted the Professor by her knowledge of philosophy and so forth. He became enthusiastic himself, talked much on the subject. She began to talk of love in the abstract. He suddenly became silent. To be brief, the Senorita labored with him in every possible way. You know what that means."

The detective tapped one side of his nose with his forefinger to intimate that he did.

"Well, in spite of all the Professor was as polite and gentlemanly as ever, and nothing else. He was even gallant, but no more. He didn't seem to understand the Senorita, though she made some hints so broad that it would take a yardstick to measure them. Was there ever such a man of ice and metaphysics, capable of resisting the charms of the Senorita Isabel Don Jervais? He was the first the Senorita ever met. Well, he left the Senorita in her hotel at 1 o'clock the next morning. She was rather discouraged, but determined on a final trial. She made it last night; had him up in her apartments. Alas, it was fruitless as the others. Just what took place the Senorita hesitates to relate; she merely hints that St. Anthony's temptation was a small circumstance to it."

The speaker's airy manner suddenly changed. After a pause, she said:

"Honestly, Reaper, I am pretty well ashamed of myself. You won't believe it, but it's a fact: to harass that good old man as I did is outrageous! There you have my mind. He is no more crooked than you are."

"I guess you're correct, Bella," returned the detective, "and you're a pretty white woman. It was a damned shame, but it seemed necessary. I'm glad it's over, anyway. Let's both forget it."

"Agreed."

"And I suppose you have quite a handsome bill to collect? Just give it to me, and I'll see that it's paid."

Bella yawned, rose and said she must hurry home. So after arranging her attire, she sallied out. Detective Reaper left the hotel some minutes later.

CHAPTER XXV.

A TERRIBLE THREAT.

The holidays were rapidly approaching, indeed Christmas was only a few days away, when if any hopes had been entertained of even a temporary cessation of the series of inhuman crimes they were speedily dashed in no uncertain manner by the hand of the assassin himself. Throwing off in a measure his mask he boldly communicated a purpose only conceivable by innumerable multiplication of the previous terrible slaughters. It was the fitting capstone of the whole diabolical structure.

Dr. Jollier, returning to his office in the afternoon from a visit of inspection to a quarantined tenement house, was informed by a clerk that some one in his absence had wished to speak to him through the telephone.

"Who was it?" asked the doctor.

"Captain Mandeville."

"Mandeville, Thomas? Did you say Mandeville?"

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk. "That's what he said his name was. In fact, sir, he asked me to take down this message for you in writing. Reads rather

funny, sir, as if it was from a crank ; but he was particular about your getting it just so."

The chief silently took the sheet of paper on which was written the message and retired to his private room. He read it several times, slowly chewed a cigar into bits, and rang the little bell on his desk.

The clerk appeared.

"Thomas, when did Captain Mandeville call us up?"

"It was—ah, let's see—yes, just half an hour ago, sir."

"Describe the circumstances. Tell me all he said."

"Well, [sir," said the clerk, looking surprised at the request, "you know I was copying and tabling those comparative diphtheria reports all morning. Just before the telephone rang, one of the emergency doctors came in to get some blanks. I gave 'em to him ; he went out ; then I went to the 'phone. 'Hello !' says somebody, 'Is this the Division of Contagious Diseases ?' I said it was. 'Well,' says the man on the wire, 'is the Chief of the Division, Dr. Jollier, in ? I wish to speak to him.' I said you had gone out but would return in an hour. 'That's unfortunate,' says the man on the wire. 'I am anxious to tell him something.' I said I'd give you any word, or he could call up later. 'Well,' says he, 'I guess you can take down my message. The Doctor'll understand it. Just write as I give it to you.' So he began and I wrote the message word for word, sir, just as you have it. That's all, sir."

"And you didn't ask him his telephone number?"

"Oh, no, sir. He seemed to know you. I thought of course—"

"Yes, yes. What sort of a voice did he have?"

"Deep and rather loud. I said to myself, I guess this is a sea captain, sure; one of those big, black-bearded fellows."

"You noticed nothing else? Could you tell whether he was talking from Fourteenth Street or Williamsburgh?"

"N-o, I don't know as I could, sir."

"Has our 'phone been used since?"

"No, sir."

"Then ask Central immediately the number of the last person talking to us."

Thomas disappeared. He reappeared the next minute.

"Central says, 'sir, that no pay station call has been made for an hour. The private ones are not recorded, and Central doesn't remember the last one."

"Ah, yes."

After chewing up another cigar, Dr. Jollier turned to the waiting clerk with:

"Thomas, hurry over to the Detective Office and ask for John Reaper. I want to see him right away. If he isn't in ask the sergeant to send him here when he appears. Then go up to the trial room, where there is a meeting of the Police Board, and if Mr. Leland, a *Trumpet* reporter, is there, send him here at once. He was there earlier."

"Yes, sir," said Thomas, and departed on his errand.

As luck would have it both the detective and Leland were in the police building. Each received his summons with something of surprise and apprehension and hastened to the office of the Contagious Diseases Division. The manner in which Dr. Jollier greeted them did not diminish their forebodings. He at once succinctly related the circumstances, as told by Thomas, of the telephonic message. Then he handed it to Detective Reaper.

"Ah!" softly whispered that individual to himself each time that his eye glanced over the messages. After the tenth perusal and the tenth "Ah!" he gave it to Leland, who had been listening to these indications of preoccupation with no little impatience.

This is what Leland read, in the hasty chirography of the clerk :

"DR. JOLLIER:—I presume you are aware that considerable crowds of people, 10,000 and upwards in number, are accustomed to gather in lower Broadway every New Year's Eve to hear the Trinity chimes. New Year's Eve happens to be less than two weeks off. What a grand opportunity for me! No more of petty deeds of revenge, or of mere art. Here is the true chance for my transcendent capability. Regiments, yes regiments, shall succumb! What is the power of kings, princes, presidents, armies, navies, compared to mine? I could annihilate them all. Perhaps I may! Pardon this egotism, *mon cher* Doctor; my commanding position quite intoxicates me. Of course delicacy forbids allusion to the little lamentable fiasco of the other day.

Adieu, then, until New Year's Eve, when, if you shall not see, you shall at least hear of, me.

“CAPTAIN MANDEVILLE.”

It is not strange that the young man shuddered as he lay down this remarkable and terrible communication. Its authenticity was shown on its face.

In a grave voice Dr. Jollier at length spoke :

“Something of this kind is just what I have been fearing. It is a natural development. So far we have managed to check the spread of the diseases and prevent a sweeping epidemic. What we can do now if this scoundrel carries out his threat I don't know.”

“Doctor,” said Detective Reaper, after a pause, “I am still rather ignorant on the scientific side. What contagious diseases could at this season of the year be disseminated by injection?”

“At least half a dozen,” replied Dr. Jollier. “Diphtheria in its malignant form would be perhaps the most communicable. The temperature has not much effect on that. Moreover, in a city like this nearly all contagious diseases can flourish somewhere all the year round. The germs are kept alive in vile tenements and other places. If there is a case of diphtheria in a country town, the houses being some distance apart the sickness is easily confined to the family in which it originated ; but if diphtheria breaks out in a city block of connected tenement houses where perhaps 1,000 people live, there is little to prevent its taking off the whole 1,000. The filth, overcrowding and general unwholesome existence of

course have considerable to do with the latter case. It is like having a number of open powder kegs with a fuse stuck in one of them—and Mandeville intends to light that fuse.”

“God forbid !” ejaculated Leland.

“I wish from the depths of my soul that He would,” quoth the physician, fervently.

“Excuse me,” said Detective Reaper, bluntly, “but it’s my opinion there’s no one but a son of hell concerned in this matter and if any one’s to circumvent him it’s ourselves ! I never knew of God forbidding anything.”

“Well, well, Reaper,” responded Dr. Jollier, “we sha’n’t have a theological discussion, but I guess we’re all of us right. You may not know it or agree to it, but it’s a fact nevertheless that in trying to stop this murderer you are acting as God’s agent. So are we all. But no more of that. Let us see what is to be done. Leland, what can you suggest ?”

“Unfortunately very little,” replied the young man. “It is a certainty, however, that it is impossible for us three to longer know in impotence these dreadful facts, to see horror piled upon horror, and be unable, as you said the other day, to lift a finger to avert it all ; especially will it be impossible to sit quietly while this demon’s proposed New Year Eve’s slaughter is taking place. I for one should feel like a sharer in the crimes if I permitted it. I say, let us publish the whole matter to the world, so that everybody may be on guard. Then Mandeville cannot continue his work. With several hundred thousand

detectives, the grown up population of Manhattan Island, looking for him he cannot escape detection. At least we should get the horrible incubus off our shoulders. We have done nothing and I can't see that the prospects otherwise are very favorable."

"My objection to your proposition, Leland," returned the chief, "one which I have already considered to some extent, is, I think weighty. In the first place, if the knowledge that we three possess was printed in to-morrow morning's newspapers I have no doubt a most tremendous panic would result. People would be afraid to leave their houses, to walk in the streets, to ride in elevated or surface cars; we would be in the position of a besieged city; those who could afford it would hurry out of town on the first train; business might have to be suspended; indeed, the various ill effects are incalculable. More important still, all this would rouse the murderer to new heights of fiendishness. With the greater danger of detection he would be more crafty and I have no doubt would manage not only to escape capture but perpetrate whatever wretched deeds he pleased. His arrest would probably be made more, not less difficult. Moreover it must be remembered there are a large number of semi-insane persons (cranks, we call them) who if they once understood, had suggested to them even, this means of slaughter, would immediately become copies of Mandeville; instead of one fiend we should have a dozen to deal with. Reaper will tell you this is a law in crime. Some lunatic hacked to pieces the body of a Whitechapel unfortunate. There have been towards

a score of imitators of that deed. Every outre crime is duplicated. So I say, publish all this and an indefinite number of Mandevilles will spring up. Instead of eleven people slaughtered, as is the present record, there shall be eleven hundred."

"Doctor, you are perfectly correct," said Detective Reaper, "and the danger from publicity that you suggest isn't by any means slight. I honestly believe that ten—no, twenty per cent. of our modern crimes is directly or indirectly due to the newspapers publishing the detailed and sensational accounts that they do. The story of any frightful deed of violence is sure to take possession of some unbalanced mind ; it stays there ; works and ferments ; finally, one day, the public is shocked to hear of another crime of the same sort. Of course it isn't to be expected that every ordinary long-haired crank would follow in Mandeville's footsteps, because that would be impossible ; lack of the proper outfit of virulent bacteria, lack of knowledge and skill would prevent. No, a much superior class of insane murderers would appear. Who knows but some modest bacteriologist now working away in his quiet nook, never dreaming of the idea, might become one of them. Powerful suggestion is a terrible thing. The most cold-blooded murder I recollect was committed by an unoffending industrious workman in a sawmill. He fed the logs to the saw. The idea struck him one day that it would be a fine thing to saw his boss in two. After thinking about it for a week he did it."

"But," cried Leland, "do we propose to calmly fold our hands and allow a wholesale killing on New

Year's Eve? Shall we let a mere possibility stand in the way of preventing the slaughter of human beings? How otherwise than by publicity can you stop the carrying out of Captain Mandeville's threat?"

"Well," replied the detective, deliberately, "if it becomes necessary I think I can prevent that crowd from assembling."

"How?"

"There are several ways. I might for instance get the rector to announce through the papers that there will be no chimes rung. In conjunction with that announcement the Superintendent could send two or three hundred policemen down town to prevent the gathering of crowds. If I was unable to persuade the rector it would be to the best interests of the greatest number not to have the chimes this year, why—well, I won't say for sure just what would happen, but it is possible the bell ringer might disappear the day before or the machinery get out of order so that it would be impossible to fix it in time."

"It is all very well," returned Leland, vehemently; "suppose you are able to prevent this threatened tragedy. Captain Mandeville is nevertheless still at large. He has only been baulked at a small point. There are other large crowds and other opportunities for him that are equally great. The fact is—I must be frank with both of you—I think it has been a monumental mistake to let this thing run on as it has with only ourselves to deal with it. Eleven murders! My God! Doctor, Reaper. This is no small thing! I mean no reflection on Reaper's

abilities as a detective, but what can he do alone? None of us has been able to do anything. If clear publicity isn't the right thing, let us at least hand over the case to the Inspector, where it belongs, and let fifty detectives, if necessary, start out on different ends within an hour."

"How about that, Reaper?" said Dr. Jollier, looking inquiringly at the sleuth, when the young man had finished. "Is there anything in it?"

"No," was the laconic response. "In this case fifty detectives would be fifty times worse than one. As to nothing having been done, our impetuous friend forgets. I think a great deal has been accomplished. No, I don't know of a single benefit that can come from giving this case to the Inspector. On the scheming side, that is, the devising of plans, and so on, I am free to say this present combination couldn't well be excelled. I could want no better associates in a puzzling case. This is a plain fact. The diversity of our minds is just the proper thing for arriving at the truth by mutual comparison and exchange of ideas. Ideas, after all, are all we need. For the mere execution of a plan I can get any number of detectives at any time. Here also is an important consideration: It is very mysterious how Captain Mandeville manages to know so much of our movements. You remember the forged cablegram? Well, that was no doubt his work, although we haven't discovered yet how it was done. This telephonic message is another proof. The villain knew evidently as well as I that day in the Second Avenue house that Josephus Jenkins was Dr. Jollier.

Either he knows the Doctor by sight or our plans were betrayed by some one. Leland was saying something the other day about the quantity of information we possessed concerning Captain Mandeville and his crimes. The fact is, I'm afraid Mandeville knows as much about our moves as we do of his. As I said, it's mysterious. In this light I wouldn't care to have the Superintendent himself added to us."

"I think I understand your meaning, Reaper," said Dr. Jollier. "It does really seem as if there was a leak somewhere, and your policy is the best. Talking of Mandeville knowing me by sight, which was one of the first things that struck me when I read his message, I have noticed for a few days past that I see the same man pretty frequently. I imagine he may be following me."

Detective Reaper laughed.

"Don't let that worry you," said he. "It's only Taylor. I meant to have told you that I set him after you the day after that Hezekiah Barnett business. It's just a little precaution."

"I'm glad to hear of that," said Leland. "I was going to suggest some time ago that the doctor ought to have a bodyguard of some kind. As to what I've said, and the suggestions I have made, I may have been a little hasty. Whatever both of you agree upon I'm ready to adopt. I see the justness of Reaper's remarks."

The detective lighted his third cigarette, expelled a quantity of smoke from his nostrils, and said:

"The situation generally might be much worse. Instead of discouraging me, this telephone message

almost makes me feel hopeful. It was a blunder. Such blunders often assist justice. You see this is the one weak point in Mandeville's armor. He could not resist writing letters to his victims, though he knew they would be sure to be found ; he could not resist going to see Josephus Jenkins, though, as his concocted story and vile attempt showed, he knew it was a trap ; now he has sent this bold message. It exhibits his egotism for one thing. With all his craftiness and skill, a few more rash blunders like this will prove his undoing. Probably he knows that fact, by the way, as well as we do."

"Wouldn't it then be a good scheme to try to communicate with him, through a newspaper personal?" asked Leland.

"That, my boy," cried the detective, "is just what I was about to suggest."

After a minute's labor with his note-book and pencil, Detective Reaper produced the following :

"CAPTAIN MANDEVILLE :—Your message by telephone received, but not very well comprehended. Perhaps mistake of clerk. Please be more explicit.
"DR. J."

"There," said the detective, reading the personal. "A fool would suspect that, and yet I'll bet Mandeville will answer it."

The trio thereupon separated, with an agreement to meet again in the Contagious Diseases Division office as soon as there was any new development.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"I'VE FOUND CAPTAIN MANDEVILLE."

It was Sunday morning two days before New Year's Eve. In the library of his Waverly Place residence Dr. Samuel Jollier, attired in negligent costume, was slowly pacing up and down. Although his face was placid as ever the volcano-like manner in which he was smoking indicated the mental tumult within him.

Out-of-doors Nature was smiling and dimpling in winter fashion, a cheerful sun tempering the vigorous air ; admirable weather for producing rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes ; far superior to the indolent and enervating weather of the warm summer months ; and people were taking advantage of it, as the crowded streets attested.

The melody of Grace Church's sweet-toned bells, with more distant and reminiscent single solemn strokes for a background, penetrated to the Doctor's study ; truth to tell, it jarred on his nerves ; just then Dr. Jollier, ordinarily one of the most reverent of men, would have unhesitatingly consigned, had it been in his power, all churches and their bells to Sheol. As if the fates had not already piled enough of a burden on his shoulders the morning's mail had brought another concern and an unexpected one. It came in the shape of a letter from the president of

the Health Board. There is no simpler way than quoting it :

“DEAR SIR :—Several members of this Board, over which I have the honor to preside, and myself, have noticed recently a number of strange cases of contagious diseases concerning which your usual reports have been meagre and unsatisfactory. Doubt has also been raised as to whether the correct measures have been adopted in these cases. Moreover, an exceedingly irregular and amazing procedure on your part in relation to the death of Mr. George Barrett, the banker, who died some weeks ago, has been brought to my attention. Of course you see the necessity of explanation on these various points. The Board meets Monday afternoon. Please attend. Yours, etc., —.”

A dullard could not fail to discern the insulting tenor of this note. The writer of it, ever since his recent appointment, had shown hostility to Dr. Jollier. He was a stout-paunched consequential individual of the extremely material latter-day kind, who thought to conduct the Health Department on the machine basis of the factories he owned. He was evidently trying to make the Doctor resign so that a man to his liking could be chief of the Division of Contagious Diseases.

“Explanation !” thought Dr. Jollier, bitterly. “He wants explanation. If I explained it would be neither comprehended nor believed. And then he talks about my ‘irregular procedure !’ I suppose

Mrs. Barrett is responsible for that. If he or any other member of the Board was capable of appreciating the circumstances, instead of being an ignorant layman, and worse—! Heaven knows I'm not anxious to be chief a minute longer; I'd resign immediately if I didn't know where my duty was."

While in the midst of these reflections, Smith the butler announced the appearance of Arthur Leland, who immediately entered the study. Dr. Jollier was secretly thankful of the interruption and arrival. He handed Leland his cigar box. The latter took a weed, lighted it, and said:

"Well, Doctor, I see indications that you've been indulging in the 'thaumaturgic art of thought' this morning."

"Yes; if you'll read that letter on my desk you'll find out one reason why," replied the physician, briefly. "Look at it."

Leland read the president's missive.

"Oh, this is shameful!" he cried. "I know that fellow. He's the sort of man to write this way. If I were you, Doctor, I'd tell him in plain language to—Ah! but I forgot about the other matter. You cannot leave it now in the condition that it is."

"No, I cannot," said the physician, soberly.

"And what of New Year's Eve? Every time I have thought of that horrible threat it has made me shudder."

"It's been bothering me, too," replied Dr. Jollier. "I haven't seen Reaper for five days. Neither has the Detective Office."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed the young man. "It's

only about sixty hours of the time ! All the papers have printed programmes of the chimes. It will be nearly impossible now to stop the gathering of a crowd ; except by platoons of police. There're hundreds of persons who will come who will not be reached by any newspaper notice that can be put in between now and then. And you say Reaper has disappeared."

"So it seems. I thought of going down to the office this afternoon and again asking about him."

"Well, it strikes me his absence is queer. Perhaps something's happened to him."

"I hope not," said the Doctor. "I don't think he would risk himself unnecessarily ; and he's shrewd enough."

At this juncture Smith brought in a visitor's card ; Sir Wilfred Montjoy, it read.

Being in no mood for ceremony, Dr. Jollier said :

"Send him in here." Which the servant accordingly did.

Sir Wilfred was a medium sized man with the absurd appearance of an ultra Englishman ; he wore copious reddish side whiskers, a monocle and a high hat ; his clothes were not of the most modest pattern, he spoke approved cockney. Possibly a hypercritical observer would have said he flavored of the stage.

"'Ave I the—ah pleasure of—ah addressing Dr. Jollier?" said the caller, squinting his monocle eye.

"You have, sir," replied the Doctor, shortly.

"Chief of the—ah Bureau of Contagious Diseases—ah?"

"Chief of the Division."

"The same thing, I fawncy?"

"Yes."

"Then I 'ave ha—ah message for you from Mr. Reaper."

"The detective, you mean?" cried both the listeners in a breath, suddenly and deeply interested.

"Haw! His 'e a detective? 'E told me 'e was a millionaire."

Leland and the Doctor were not sure whether they had blundered or whether they should laugh.

Sir Wilfred calmly rummaged about among some letters, presumably looking for the message. He partially turned his head. Now, looking back again, what was the astonishment of the observers to see a face devoid of mutton-chops, indeed the jovial face of Detective Reaper himself!"

"Ha! ha!" shouted the detective, seeing the amazed countenances of his friends. "You couldn't recognize me in my Sunday costume, eh? This is almost as good a joke as Taylor's old woman!"

Somewhat nettled, Dr. Jollier said:

"Reaper, I don't see that any one of us has a right to laugh very much just at this stage of things."

The detective instantly sobered down.

"You know, Doctor," he said, "I didn't come here in this shape for amusement. I happened to have on the outfit and there wasn't time to change it. When I got here I couldn't resist the temptation of having a little fun. But the fact is—I've found Captain Mandeville."

The effect of this blunt announcement may be

imagined. If the detective had said, "I've found the North Pole"—!

Astonishment and surprise are weak words to express the feelings of the hearers. They gazed speechless at the detective.

"Do you—mean it?" at length stammered Dr. Jollier.

"True as Gospel," promptly replied Detective Reaper.

"And he will be arrested? You have the evidence? He can't escape?"

"Within two hours," said the detective, "he will be under lock and key. I have a warrant right in my pocket. The ink isn't dry on it yet. As for escaping, two of the sharpest men that ever wore shoe leather are watching him. He can't get away."

Dr. Jollier lifted his hand.

"Before you say another word, Reaper," he said, "we'll have some liquor."

The servant brought in a tray on which stood a bottle of cognac and three glasses. The glasses were filled to the brim.

"We drink," quoth the Doctor, solemnly, "to John Reaper, the capturer of Captain Mandeville."

Leland's hand trembled so that half the liquor in his glass was spilled.

"I suppose," began the detective, wiping his lips with a napkin, "I had better tell first who Mandeville is. Every one of us here has seen him. Dr. Jollier, you know him well—name him."

"No, no, it cannot be!" protested the physician, with paling cheek. "Impossible."

"Nevertheless, it is so. The damnable murderer is—"

The speaker paused.

"Speak ! Who?" cried Dr. Jollier, in a sudden break of emotion.

"I will write it on a slip of paper," said the detective. "It is less shocking so."

The name that the physician read was Dr. Francois Clemence !

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE DETECTIVE'S STORY.

It was to the chief perhaps as staggering a blow as had been that supposedly deadly discovery in the Second Avenue mansion.

Dr. Clemence, a bacteriologist in the employ of the city who had been under his immediate supervision for three years, a gay, sunny-tempered Frenchman, withal accounted an expert in his branch, was the frightful murderer who had killed eleven persons in a most diabolic manner !

The idea seemed incredible.

Leland, too, was shocked and horrified beyond measure.

The last dying peal of a church bell floated into the silent study where sat the three men. It had a weird effect. The echoes of the passing notes seemed to throb in the air.

The detective's voice sounded unnecessarily loud and harsh when he broke the silence.

"I knew you would be hardly able to believe it," he said. "I couldn't at first. This same man—or devil—gave me lessons in bacteriology, you know, when I first went on the case."

"And there is no doubt?" said Dr. Jollier, slowly.

"None whatever," was the decisive answer. The evidence is sufficient to electrocute Francois Clemence twice over. He is the murderer. It is now (the detective looked at his watch) quarter past eleven; by one I must have Clemence remanded; therefore I'll hurry my story. I begin:

"The last time we met was twelve days ago, in your office, Doctor. You showed a message you had received from Captain Mandeville. He said he was going to do some killing on New Year's Eve in the Trinity Church crowd. We had quite a talk about how we'd deal with that. We decided incidentally to put a little advertisement in the papers—'Message not understood' and so on. There has been no reply to the advertisement, I might say.

"Well, when I returned to the Police Office that day I saw that matters were pretty nearly coming to a head. It was high time to be doing something. Either the murderer must be caught right away, or they'd be hell to pay in earnest. Before that I'd done some investigating that came to less than nothing and made some preliminary moves which didn't amount to much. Now I said to myself, John Reaper, you've got a big case on hand; you've been fooling long enough; get to work and use your

brains ; if you can't work and haven't any brains, then for heaven's sake resign ! Saying that did me good.

“ I remembered what you'd said about it's being hopeless to look up individual bacteriologists on account of there being so many of them ; but I determined that end was worth a trial. So I got ten spare men from the office, hired fifty more from several detective agencies, and set them after every known bacteriologist within twenty miles of the City Hall. On the fourth day I got fifty-seven reports. One of the missing three became sick. Another lost himself in the shuffle, and the third being too enthusiastic and not obeying instructions, got on board a steamer with a Brooklyn professor and is now probably pretty near Rio Janeiro. While those fifty-seven reports of course did me no good, some of them made mighty queer reading, I can tell you. If they were published together under the title, 'Lives of Scientists,' they'd make a sensation. Well, I picked from those reports ten of the most suspicious cases and had them further investigated ; but before another four days I struck the right trail and called off everybody.

“ You see I sat right down to my desk and constructed hypothetically the man I wanted. He was some one, according to the evidence, close to the Department ; he knew the chief of it ; he had at his command a range of cultures not likely to be found in a private collection ; therefore he was in some public laboratory ; possibly he was permanently disguised as a Frenchman ; the Jew was killed by a

Frenchy looking man ; ‘ *Mon cher,*’ says Mandeville in his telephone message. Well, when I had finished all this I wondered who the cap would fit. In two seconds came the answer, Francois Clemence, Dr. Wilbur’s assistant ! He was in a position as no one else to learn our plans. No one else could have learned them. Did you not give him all the cultures of the murdered man to diagnose ? Did he not find out everything from me ?—Fool that I was ! I remember his asking me questions. As for Mandeville’s being an Englishman, so he was twenty years ago ; but he captained the ‘ *Bride of Plymouth* ’ at an early age ; he had plenty of time to go to France and become a thorough Gaul ; especially if he was inclined that way. In the matter of age, forty-five years, a fair estimate of Clemence’s, would be sufficient. Yes, without getting up from my desk I determined he was the guilty one. Of course it was impossible to suspect Dr. Wilbur in any connection. He is a good fat man.

“ Well, while I felt assured I had the right villain, I was nevertheless aware of the legal requirements. That’s a disagreeable part of the detective business—getting evidence that will pass the lawyers and the Judge and that twelve men will believe. It’s not one but a dozen scoundrels I have seen go scot free because of some little lack or flaw in the evidence. I was bound not to have it so in this case ; in short I’ve been working since day and night, scraping together every particle of fact. My most important discovery was made in Clemence’s rooms. He lived in an old house at Perry and Fourth Streets, one of

the most God-forsaken and strange regions in the city ; you might think it was a part of Paris or London or any other town than New York. Perhaps neither of you have noticed the exact section ; where the houses are all two and three-storied brick ones, red brick ; some have mansard roofs ; they're all from twenty-five to a hundred years old ; everything is musty and old-fashioned ; the streets are narrow ; in the daytime it's quieter than in the country ; at night you wish you were walking elsewhere.

"However, the people of the house were very decent. They are an old man, his wife, and a grown-up daughter. I forget their names but it doesn't matter. Clemence, according to the old man, came there two years ago, under the name of Albert ; Monsieur Albert, by which name he was always known. He said he wanted quiet and so forth, and would be a steady lodger. They rented to him a large back room on the second floor, about the size of this library, and a connecting bedroom. A sort of back entrance stairway gives access from the main room to the area ; then there is a little gate that lets one into the street by the side of the house.

"Monsieur Albert, it seems, was even a quieter lodger than was expected. He got into occasionally coming in by the back way ; finally he never entered or left the house but by that staircase, and only by rare chance any member of the family ever saw him. But he paid his rent every month regularly and that was enough. When I learned this I got a search warrant, but I had to wait until yesterday afternoon

before I had a favorable opportunity for going through the rooms without the knowledge of the occupant. Taylor was with me. We were careful to leave everything after examination just as it was before. In a satchel we managed to pick the lock of there was a complete outfit for disguising one's self—wigs, moustaches, beards, besides hats and shoes and two or three different suits of clothes. A pair of white whiskers looked as if they might be Hezekiah Barnett's, but I wasn't sure about 'em.

"We then went to the secretary, a tall mahogany affair, and opened it. There were a good many letters of no importance and a lot of general rubbish. Next thing I discovered in a little drawer locked with a separate key a memorandum. It was a slip of paper with the names of the wretch's victims written on it, beginning with the beggar who died of cholera. There was an X opposite each name; the poor devils had been literally checked off. As I had decided not to disturb anything I left the memorandum in the drawer.

"Well, we came to a sort of cupboard. It was so securely locked we took nearly half an hour to open it. Here was a clincher indeed! That cupboard contained a whole bacteriological laboratory in miniature. Holes were cut in one of the shelves for twenty-five test tubes to fit into; each tube had a culture in it, and a third of the cultures were of the very pale color of the deadly diseases. The culture compartment of the cupboard was heated by a sort of self-regulated alcohol lamp. There was also some cotton, a microscope, some long needles, two hypo-

dermic syringes, agar-agar, and other stuff. The test tubes, by the way, weren't marked with the names of the diseases, as they generally are, but each was lettered from A to Z ; the twenty-fifth, however, was numbered one. You can see the cunning of having this private collection ; the scoundrel could almost as well have used the department cultures ; but he avoided even the slight risk that lay in their employment.

"We didn't find much more. I might mention though, a highly complimentary letter of recommendation written by Pasteur, under whom Mandeville or Clemence studied. The letter said he was a first-class bacteriologist, very zealous, and bound to make his mark. I think he has ! Oh, the horrible villain ! I felt like waiting for him and strangling him with my own hands. Such a smooth voiced, well dressed, polite, gay devil at that ! My true opinion is the man is a living Jekyll and Hyde ; only this one kills eleven where the other killed one.

"I left Taylor to watch the house and hustled out to look up some addresses we'd found and sweep up the ends generally. One of the things I learned in a short time was that Clemence is engaged to marry a rich girl who lives on Fifth Avenue. I got a good many points from her. I also found out Clemence is running for the presidency of the Bacteriologists' Association of North America. He was cutting a big swath in all directions. Now, unfortunately, I can't even allow him the privilege of cutting his own throat. But it's a pity the law won't snuff him out in his own special style."

As Detective Reaper concluded he poured out some brandy, tossed it off, wiped off his face as if he were perspiring, and, lighting a cigarette, smoked vigorously

Leland, who had been listening with all the strain of a theatre-goer's absorbed attention, leaned back in his chair and took in a deep, audible breath.

Dr. Jollier quietly said :

"All that you say is doubtless correct, although it still appears incredible—like a dream. But there is an important discrepancy."

"And that is?"

"Why, the day we met Mandeville in the Second Avenue house and soon after drove to the Bacteriological Department, we found Clemence there with Dr. Wilbur."

"That point occurred to me," replied the detective. "I looked into it. I found Clemence had only come in two or three minutes before you and Leland arrived. He left the office at 10 o'clock that morning on some slight pretext. He returned in time to meet his superior, who had just lunched, at the stairway of the laboratory. They went up together. My idea is, Barnett, alias Mandeville, alias Clemence, jumped into a waiting cab after his interview with us, and changed his dress inside while being driven to Bleecker Street. He alighted within a block or two of the laboratory, walked over, met Dr. Wilbur, and there you are. He had perhaps told the cabby beforehand he was a detective and ordered the Hezekiah Barnett disguise, wrapped up in a parcel, delivered at such and such an address. That's done

very often ; the whole affair concerning the cabman is simple and natural as sliding down hill."

"Isn't the theory of 'Michigan's' death knocked out then?" said Leland. "The Doctor calculated he got the cholera germs administered to him in some liquid the day he was begging in the cross streets between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and above Fortieth Street."

"Well," said the detective, "there are a few such pieces that don't fit in, but I'll make 'em later ; it's my business. The main thing is, I've got the murderer."

"Oh, I meant only to ask you a question," hastily replied the young man. "But what an extraordinary actor that Clemence is ! Not to mention his Hezekiah Barnett, how he laughed and slapped his leg the day you danced around with Dr. Wilbur ! That seems frightful now, though. What a Machiavellian fiend !"

"He's no doubt a villain out of a million. But the time now is for action ; I must serve this warrant. Leland, you can come with me if you like."

"I'll do so," said the young man, rising.

"Before you go, Reaper," quoth Dr. Jollier, "I want to shake hands with you. Every mother's son of us on this island is indebted to you immeasurably. You've done a great service. And I personally owe you a great deal."

"Doctor," said Detective Reaper, simply, "you're very kind. I'm always glad to shake your hand. Come, Leland, we must go."

So saying the detective deftly transformed himself

again into Sir Wilfrid Montjoy, and, accompanied by Leland, left the house.

Dr. Jollier, when the two had gone, for a considerable length of time alternately whistled (or tried to whistle) a gay opera tune and, pacing up and down, gloomily muttered, "Poor Clemence! unfortunate man!"

It was one of those miserable pieces of news over which one must both rejoice and weep.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ARREST.

Briskly and in silence the detective and his companion walked westward side by side through Waverly Place. Little indeed did those who observed the pair imagine their stern errand. In fact the peculiar habit of the apparent Englishman and Leland's genteel style did not present the most congruous picture.

When within a few blocks of the house the detective dodged into the "family entrance" hallway of a deserted saloon. He gave Leland a revolver, saying:

"Just have this handy, because you may need it. My plans are all made. Keep close by me."

The young man thrust the weapon in his pistol pocket. Then they hurried on

At the doorstep of the secluded structure Detective Reaper, before employing the heavy dog's head knocker, paused, and looked about. Not a soul was in sight ; but in a moment, the door of the house opposite quietly opened and a man emerging therefrom crossed the street ; whereupon Detective Reaper turned, with a satisfied air, and plied the knocker.

The newcomer Leland recognized as Detective Taylor. He had been on guard for the last six hours and reported that within that time no one had entered or left the house.

After a short interval the widowed daughter of the family, still a young woman and not ill pleasing in looks, threw open the portal.

"Monsieur Albert is in, is he not, Madame ?" said Detective Reaper in honeyed accents, lifting his hat.

"Oh, yes, sir ! That is, I think so. If you gentlemen will come in and sit down a moment, I'll see."

"Ah ! we can't trouble you so much. Monsieur Albert should be expecting us. We'll go right up, I guess."

"W-e-ll," began the young woman, dubiously ; but by that time the three callers were at the head of the stairs.

The important moment had come. At last, after all his eludings, the horrid prince of criminals, fiendish slayer of eleven men, was to be apprehended. His cunning and skill were of no more avail. His frightful career of blood was to be abruptly and forever ended.

But was it likely that such an indomitable genius of Satan would tamely surrender himself to the rep-

representatives of the law ? Leland's hand instinctively crept around to his pistol pocket ; he felt comparatively cool.

Rat-tat-tat went the knuckles of the leader of the party against the door panel of " Monsieur Albert's " apartment.

A pause. Then :

" Enter," said a languid voice within.

Detective Reaper turned the knob and rather slowly pushed the door open with his foot, as if he half suspected some kind of a trap. The suspicion, however, was groundless. Book in hand, leaning back in a large easy chair, was the occupant of the room. A smoking Turkish water pipe stood on the floor beside him. He immediately jumped to his feet and smilingly advancing towards the visitors, exclaimed :

" Pardon, gentlemen ! I imagined it was my landlady. Allow me to give you seats."

And Monsieur genially bustled about producing chairs.

What audacity !

Leland was quite staggered.

Taylor, who had a vague idea they were dealing with a professional swindler, grunted.

But Detective Reaper said, curtly :

" We haven't got the time to sit down. Neither have you ; except for a chair up the river."

The Frenchman turned with a puzzled air. He said :

" No ? You speak in—what you call ?—yes, para-

bles, Mistaire Reaper. I think, by-the-by, I have met your friend, Mistaire Leland, also."

"The devil!" growled the detective. "You understand well enough. Don't give us the pious face. Your jig's up."

"Piyusface—jigsup," repeated the Frenchman, thoughtfully. "That is Greek. But le Diabolo means—that you are excited, Monsieur."

"Yes, by God, I am!" thundered Detective Reaper. "A cold blooded fish from the Arctic Circle would be excited by such a damned villain as you! Miserable wretch, Francois Clemence, or whatever your name is, I place you under arrest!"

What magic of words or mien was it that produced such an astounding effect on such an adamantine subject?

The color deserting his face Clemence clutched tightly the back of a chair, and faltered:

"Arrest? Arrest me?"

Strange indeed!

Was this weak-voiced stammerer the marble-hearted fiend, the cool, calculating demon and unutterable murderer?

A wonderful metamorphosis!

The exhibition of pusillanimity had a peculiar horror attached to it. It was repulsive. Anything tragical and courageous would have been fit and expected.

"Yes," said Detective Reaper, his sudden anger frozen into contempt; "arrest you; that's it exactly. Why do you ask? Haven't you done enough? Per-

haps you wanted to carry out your New Year's Eve scheme."

The Frenchman had dropped back in his chair with a hopeless gesture. Now he suddenly started up and gave a quick glance towards the back of the apartment.

"No, no ; don't do that," said the detective, comprehending. "It won't do you any good. I've got a man there, too. Oh, you're caught all right enough."

Clemence sank back to his former posture. He covered his face, now really looking anguished, with his hands. The display of such ogre-like, distorted emotion was sickening to at least Leland.

At length the accused one gasped out :

"Yes, yes, I admit. I am guilty. Do with me what you will. It is right that punishment should come at last."

"Remember this !" whispered Detective Reaper, to his companions. "It is evidence."

Leland wrote the words in his notebook.

Detective Reaper hastily stepped forward ; there was a little metallic rattling and a couple of quick clicks—and Monsieur Albert, alias, etc., was securely handcuffed.

"That's better," quoth the detective, in a satisfied tone. "Now you can't hurt a fly ; not even yourself. I was a little afraid before, but I had my gun ready. Stand up, and we'll see if you've got any little syringes about you."

The prisoner silently rose to his feet. The detectives thoroughly explored every pocket and were

also careful to look for deceits in the lining ; but they found only a packet of letters, a penknife, a bunch of keys, and some small coin, all of which effects were confiscated.

" Leland get his overcoat, if you will," said the leader, when the examination was concluded. " It must be in the closet."

The young man found the garment and also an Alpine hat. Nothing more harmful than a pair of gloves being found in the overcoat pockets the handcuffs were for an instant removed and the overcoat was slipped on the prisoner's back, after which the "bracelets" were replaced. Then the hat was placed on his head.

Reaper said :

" We don't do this for any love of you ; it's only to bring you in good shape to your judgment ; otherwise I'd take you out naked."

The prisoner made no reply.

" Must be a tough bird," grunted Taylor, " to have you down on him like this."

" He's a sitter," responded the other, briefly.

" Mf ! I took him for a ten yearer."

Opening the door which communicated with the back staircase, Detective Reaper thrust his head out, put two fingers to his lips, and whistled shrilly. A moment later in response to the signal there appeared the detective who was on guard outside. He was the redoubtable Shrinker.

" Well, Shrinker, it's all O. K. as you see," said the leader. " We're going to take him away. I want

you to stay here until we get time to search the room."

"Right!" replied the Shrinker. "And Baby'll relieve me in two hours."

"Yes."

Thereupon the prisoner, speechless, unresisting, and his pale face expressive of intense misery, was somewhat roughly escorted out of the house, a detective on either side, Leland following behind.

A four wheeler was in waiting two blocks away. Thither the party went. Had it been elsewhere than in this strange deserted region the unusual spectacle of a handcuffed man being led through the open street in broad day would have drawn a large crowd. Monsieur Albert-Clemence-Mandeville-Barnett was unceremoniously pushed into the vehicle; the others then jumped in.

"Drive to Jefferson Market," ordered the leader.

The cab rattled and dashed down the street over the unequal paving. Taylor and Leland sat in the rear seat, the latter facing the prisoner, who was beside Detective Reaper. No one spoke. The Frenchman's head lay sunk on his breast in an abject attitude. He did not move during the whole journey.

Soon the vehicle drew up in front of the police court. Shoving the prisoner's hat down over his eyes so that no over zealous reporter should recognize him the detectives led him into the fortress-like building. Taking him into a private room the justice was summoned

"Ah, Reaper," said His Honor; "got your man, eh? You want him remanded, I suppose."

"Yes, Judge. To-morrow afternoon at two o'clock will do."

"So be it," said His Honor, sententiously, sticking his hand in his pockets.

The perfunctory business thus rapidly over the prisoner was hustled back to the carriage, where Leland had remained for fear of being unpleasantly questioned by his newspaper associates.

Half an hour later Dr. Francois Clemence, bacteriologist in the employ of the city, charged with the diabolic murder of eleven persons, sat in a darkened cell under the gray marble pile of the Police Building. The handcuffs remained on him lest he should attempt violence upon himself.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ASSEVERATIONS OF INNOCENCE.

Before nine o'clock the next morning Dr. Jollier was at his office. There was an unusually large amount of work on hand and also a heavy mail; but vigorously as he attacked his labors his thoughts were far elsewhere, as may be easily imagined. A philosopher with a paradoxical turn has said, Nothing is Wonderful but the Commonplace; which saying the worthy Doctor brought to mind in connec-

tion with the tragic events of the past three months and their tragic denouement ; but he was inclined to reject the aphorism. Considering coolly and impartially the man Clemence as he had known him ; his conduct ; Dr. Jollier could only marvel. It is not infrequent to hear of church going and "irreproachable" bank officials and the like disappearing ; leaving behind to be suddenly disclosed a record of speculation extending over a longer or shorter period. Whereat the world wonders. The fact is, in most of these cases the church going side is merely the one uppermost and the associates at least of the errant ones, are aware of their real character ; at lowest have sure indications of it. With the late bacteriological assistant, on the other hand, the case was not so, as Dr. Jollier remarked. In all his three years' work for the city no one noted look, word or deed that belied the normal man. When he laughed it was with his entire spirit ; sincerity could not fail to be discerned in his speech ; the observer would have said, A transparent man. Under that deceiving shallow transparency what frightful depths apparently lay ! What prodigy of spiritual abortion must constitute the secret foundation of such a nature !

Towards the noon hour a policeman on duty at Headquarters brought word to Dr. Jollier from the prisoner, in fact, a scrap of paper scrawled on with a blunt lead pencil. It read :

"For God's sake, Doctor, come and see me ! A terrible mistake.—F. CLEMENCE."

"I wouldn't have bothered you, chief," said the officer, apologetically, "but the fellow was raving so ; said he knew you. He's some Frenchman. His face seems halfway familiar to me, but I can't place him. Will you see him ?"

"No," began Dr. Jollier ; then, changing his mind he put on his hat and accompanied the bluecoat.

When in the Police Building the sergeant in charge conducted the Doctor down the stairway leading to the subterranean chambers. Cell No. 15, which had briefly accommodated on various occasions many notables in crime, was the one which held the former bacteriologist. The cell, meanly lighted by a pavement grating, of narrow dimensions, contained but a sort of iron cot, an appliance of necessity, and a pitcher of water. Sitting on the edge of the cot, his wrists still bound together with the steel cuffs, haggard, stoop-shouldered, with dishevelled hair, was the miserable Frenchman. As Dr. Jollier appeared in front of the cell he started up quickly, made a motion as if to hide his handcuffs ; then, apparently acquiescing to fate, advanced to the iron door grating. Involuntarily Dr. Jollier stepped back a pace ; a movement the prisoner did not fail to notice, for he exclaimed, with a passing touch of bitterness :

"Do not be afraid. You see how I am helpless !"

"Yes, you certainly are," was the matter-of-fact answer.

The prisoner's manner changed to correspond more to his look of misery.

"Then, chief," he stammered, "you too think me

guilty? You believe the horrible charge made against me?"

"I must."

"God help me!"

"Your blasphemy," said Dr. Jollier, sternly, "will avail nothing. And, wretch, have you not confessed?"

"No!"

"Be careful what you say. When you were arrested yesterday you acknowledged your guilt. I know all about it."

"Ah! Doctor, there is the error," cried the Frenchman, eagerly. "In truth—"

"Bah!" interrupted Dr. Jollier, contemptuously. "If you've confessed that's all there is to it. I see myself now that you are the vile murderer. You might at least show courage."

Dr. Jollier started to walk away.

The prisoner suddenly clutched with his manacled hands the grating and cried, frantically:

"Let me explain! Do not go until I have told you!"

"Clean gone, I guess," observed the visitor's escort, in an undertone, significantly tapping his head.

The physician wavered irresolute a moment. Then he turned back and said, shortly:

"Well, then, be quick."

"I must speak to you alone," said the prisoner.

The sergeant walked to the end of the corridor, out of hearing.

Thereupon the Frenchman, pressing his haggard

face in an interstice between the bars of the door grating, began impetuously, in a low voice :

"I did not confess, as they that arrested me imagined. I misunderstood. It was so like a flash of lightning when Detective Reaper said, 'I arrest you,' that I lost my senses. I thought it was to arrest me for something else, an unfortunate thing I committed in France ten years ago. So I said, 'Yes, I admit. I am guilty.' They took me to police court, then brought me here. It was only this morning that I found out the terrible charge—that I am the murderer who has killed eleven persons by injecting bacilli of diseases into their bodies. I see what a web of evidence surrounds me, I see I am doomed unless I prove my innocence, I send for you. This, I swear to you, is the truth."

"How, then," said Dr. Jollier, coldly, "do you account for the collection of cultures in the closet of your room?"

"That is easy," replied Clemence. "I have been conducting experiments of my own. They have come to nothing, it is true. These experiments have been on a different line than my work for the city. It would have been difficult to keep the cultures apart in the laboratory ; besides I felt I should not use the city's time or material. Therefore I established a laboratory of my own. You see my own honesty is part of the evidence against me. It would have been as well if I had been less honest."

"Very ingenious," thought Dr. Jollier. Audibly he said :

"Go on ; continue. Perhaps it will be as easy to

explain that slip of paper with the names of the men you murdered written on it."

"Ah, that slip!" exclaimed the prisoner, mournfully. "I was a fool to make it, but I am innocent in that, also. I made it mostly by guess. You gave me an anthrax culture to study. I saw it was human. I thought about it for a long time; then I said, It is murder. I remembered the case of cholera and how it's origin could not be traced. Perhaps the same murderer, I thought. Next I had a mallei culture. 'The assassin continues,' I said. Afterwards came the diphtheria, then hydrophobia, then small-pox. It was not difficult to connect them all as the work of one man. As to the names, I had the beggar's, of course, from the newspapers. One day you mentioned the banker, George Barrett, in a way that made me suspect he was one of the victims. The day after he died you gave me the anthrax culture. Therefore George Barrett was the second victim. Sergeant Phillips, according to the newspapers, died of heart disease, but as I learned the station house was disinfected by your order early that morning, and moreover the same day I received from you a human mallei culture, the conclusion was simple. In the same way I discovered who were the other victims."

Said the visitor, ironically :

"An adroit and plausible explanation, worthy of Captain Mandeville. Probably you have something to say now about the disguises found in your room and why you went under the name of Albert. Under-

stand, however, that I may yet be a witness against you."

Raising his manacled hands above his head, the Frenchman said in eloquent and thrilling accents :

"I repeat to you by all that is holy, before the God of Judgment, I am telling but the truth. May I meet just punishment if it is not so. I can only repeat to the authorities what I am now saying. I am as innocent of the crimes of which I am charged as you are yourself. All I know concerning them are my deductions and inferences which I have recounted. As to the disguises and the assumed name, I can say only this : Some years ago, before I came to this country, I had the misfortune to commit a deed of which I have bitterly repented every moment of my existence since. It was done while I was—drunk. That was the only time I ever touched liquor. Soon after this I feared I might have to flee ; so I purchased those disguises. When I came to New York, I intended to live under an assumed name. But I found I was compelled to refer to my instructor, Pasteur, when I applied for the position of bacteriologist in the city laboratory. Therefore I gave the name under which I was christened, Francois Clemence. I was Monsieur Albert at the house where I lodged, it is true. Two years ago, when I rented those rooms, on the impulse of the moment I gave that name. Afterwards I realized it was a foolish attempt at precaution. Perhaps my conduct may appear contemptible and cowardly ; but I argued I was not wholly to blame for the action that made me a legal fugitive ; there were

extenuating circumstances ; at least it was done and no benefit could come from my receiving punishment. I had thoroughly repented. Moreover, I imagined I was worth more to science than to society as an example. However, when I was arrested yesterday (for that deed, as I thought) I instantly knew it was justice. I said, ' I am guilty.' "

The hearer of this not unastonishing and involved statement had been in truth moved by a number of opposite feelings of nearly equal strength. The manner of the reciter seemed sincerity itself. What could be his object in thus prematurely disclosing his defense ? Why should he unfold it to his former superior ? Was it craft, or, after all, madness ? " At any rate," said Dr. Jollier to himself, " this talk can do no harm." Therefore, continuing to hide his puzzlement, he said, carelessly :

" So you confessed to another—crime, eh ? What was it ? "

Clemence, who had been eagerly scanning the Doctor's face as if to ascertain the effect of his words, seemed struck in a new way by the question. He opened his lips to speak, hesitated, was silent a moment, then slowly answered :

" Doctor, you ask me a hard question. Why should I say ? It would mean ruin for me if I did, and no benefit to any one. However, in confidence I shall gladly—"

" No," interrupted the other, harshly, " I want no confidences. Whatever you tell me you tell to your judges."

" Ah, what a position !" cried the Frenchman

tragically. "You do not understand, I am certain. Scylla is this terrible charge of many murders; Charybdis that unfortunate miserable offense which I dare not name. If I did not know the strong evidence against me, and also the habit of the police of sacrificing innocent men to their reputations, I should be indifferent. But even publicity will ruin me. Doctor, you are my only hope."

"It is a false hope," replied the visitor, grimly. He added, curiously: "And you will not reveal that offense, as you term it?"

"Only to save my life," was the impressive answer of the prisoner. "At least, Doctor, you cannot entirely desert me. A frightful injustice is being committed. Consider what I have told you. It is God's truth."

At this moment steps were heard approaching along the side corridor and the appearance of Detective Reaper abruptly terminated the interview. The detective quietly took Dr. Jollier's arm and went upstairs with him. The latter started to relate the conversation he had had with Clemence.

"Fact is," said the detective, "I heard, or rather overheard, it all. It's a first-rate interesting story, but it won't wash. Already I've found new evidence."

After a brief colloquy Dr. Jollier returned to his office. He saw personally, though much against his inclination, the president of the Health Board, and obtained grumbling consent to postpone until the next meeting of the Board the demanded explanation of "irregularities."

As to Clemence, instead of his public examination in Jefferson Market Court taking place in the afternoon, as had been decreed, it was decided to have him again privately arraigned before the Justice, which was done. He was then remanded for another day in Detective Reaper's custody.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE INFORMER.

The last day of the old year, Anno Domini 189-, will ever be regarded as memorable by several of the persons whom these pages concern. It was one of those days that comprise and conclude in action the uneventful (or even eventful) record of long previous stretches of time. After months of manœuvring in the field the two hostile armies suddenly meet and settle their differences in a day ; the most momentous occurrences in the annals of mankind have required but twenty-four hours in which to transpire. The silent growth of the oak for a thousand years has been remarked ; great also is the speedy culminating fall by the woodman's axe.

Some forty-eight hours had now elapsed since the arrest of Francois Clemence. Nevertheless the fact of his apprehension still remained a secret with the three individuals who had the most to do with it. Dr. Wilbur wondered at the unexplained absence of

his usually prompt and assiduous assistant ; finally he reported it to the chief of the Contagious Diseases Division, who said vaguely such absence was "all right ;" whereupon Dr. Wilbur slowly walked back to the laboratory and pondered long. His Honor the police justice was not inquisitive about Detective Reaper's prisoner ; he always relied on the detective's judgment (not ever having found reason to mistrust it) and cheerfully filled out warrants and performed the other functions in his power without asking questions : the very paper of commitment recited that John Doe was detained by the People of the State of New York as a "suspicious person." The sleuths who had assisted in the capture were but slightly informed and they lacked not the professional talent of forgetting ; the Inspector himself, who was at the head of the Detective Bureau, was even more ignorant of the case ; while the Superintendent, through whom directly Dr. Jollier had enlisted the services of the police, shared like bliss, as perhaps intimated by the maximist.

All this secrecy was of course a source of extreme worryment to the eagle-eyed police court reporters. Who could be the mysterious handcuffed prisoner Detective Reaper had thus privately and twice remanded ? Echo answered in startling speculations and the nine points of modern journalism were satisfied.

It is true the accused might have demanded the right of counsel and immediate examination. Without saying whether such demands would have been acceded to, he did not make them. Perhaps still

hoping to miraculously prove his innocence and regain freedom before the law's ponderous and difficult to stop machinery was fairly set in motion, with attendant publicity? Who knows.

Such had been Detective Reaper's recent exhausting labors without much chance of rest that the sun was at its highest point in the heavens when he awoke this day in his room in a quiet Broadway hotel, the favorite hostelry of upcountry visitors to the metropolis, situated in the midst of the wholesale dry goods district; a safe, secluded and convenient abode for one of his calling. After donning with his usual nicety his always faultless attire the detective descended to the dining-room and breakfasted modestly (oatmeal and milk, soft boiled eggs, steak, and coffee), then lit a cigar and leisurely wended his way to the Central Office.

Towards 2 o'clock he escorted the occupant of Cell No. 15 to the rear entrance, the Mott Street side, of the police building. A cab was in waiting. The prisoner, changed so by confinement—lack of soap, sleeping in his clothes and else—that only those most familiar with his face would have recognized him, and his capturer got into the vehicle and were rapidly driven to the police court. Again His Honor gave private audience, again pronounced the remanding formula. Then Detective Reaper hurried Clemence back to the cab, successfully eluding the waylaying reporters. Having returned to Headquarters the prisoner was once more locked up.

Now detectives, like authors and other men, generally have in hand at one time several pieces of

work in various stages of completion ; in fact the nature of their profession is such that intermittent labors produce the best results. Theirs is essentially a waiting craft. Investigation of one crime, when it has reached a certain point, must be temporarily suspended ; then the weaver of evidence takes up other threads on his loom. So it was with Detective Reaper, and after seeing his prisoner safe in his cell he hastened off on an old quest, specifically to scan the faces of the passengers on an outgoing transatlantic steamer, as he had information that a much wanted person might be among them. The vessel sailed at half-past three.

To the detective's disappointment she did not have aboard the desired individual. However, he solaced himself with the casual apprehension of a pickpocket who was plying his trade on the crowded pier and took him to the nearest police station. Then he strolled uptown afoot and was back at the Central Office about six o'clock.

He sat down and engaged in a lazy badinage with the desk sergeant. A part of a morning paper was lying on the floor. It was the journal chiefly famed for its "Personal" column and the one in which Josephus Jenkins had advertised ; it had also contained the guileful request for further information in answer to Captain Mandeville's telephonic message. This the detective in a lull of repartee picked up and turning to the "personals" carelessly perused them. They were of the usual kind—secretly worded assignations, blackmailing love and matrimonial proposals, requests for interviews and what not.

The last one of the list, however, was different. As the detective's eye lighted on it he uttered a subdued ejaculation. The cause of his perturbation read laconically thus :

“DR. J. :—What is information of Captain Mandeville worth ?”

For a space of several seconds Detective Reaper corrugated his brow over the surprising communication. At length he crammed the paper into his pocket, whistled thoughtfully, replied to the sergeant's last remark with a grunt, and left the office. He went to the Contagious Diseases Bureau and asked if Dr. Jollier had yet departed.

“Went away two hours ago. Perhaps you'll find him at home,” said the solitary night clerk.

At first the detective thought he would wait until the next day ; upon further reflection he decided not to delay. Walking across to Broadway he took a cable car to Waverly Place. Dr. Jollier was at dinner when the detective arrived. He would have conferred with the visitor immediately, but was persuaded to finish his meal, which he quickly did. Then he entered his study, where Detective Reaper was waiting.

“Doctor,” said the caller abruptly, “I just discovered something, or it discovered me, that I don't know what to make of. I want to get your opinion.”

Thereupon the detective drew forth the copy of the newspaper, indicated with one finger the puzzling line, and handed it to the Doctor.

Dr. Jollier read the rubric, glanced at the date line of the paper, and said—nothing.

“Well?” quoth the other, with a touch of impatience.

“Why,” responded the chief, slowly, “this seems to me like good news.”

“You mean—?”

“That some one wants to furnish additional evidence, for a consideration.”

The detective said :

“Well, of course that’s what appears on the surface. But as this personal is no doubt the result of what we put in the other day about not understanding Captain Mandeville’s message, how did the writer of it know that any information of Mandeville, alias Clemence, was wanted ; and how does he have any information to give—unless he’s an accomplice? And accomplices we haven’t allowed for. So far all the evidence shows Clemence worked entirely alone. Besides, if he did have an accomplice or a tool he wasn’t fool enough to tell that man he was Captain Mandeville, that name being the one under which the murders were committed ; he wasn’t fool enough to let that tool know anything dangerous about himself. If we had advertised for this information I could understand that it was some surviving member of the ‘Bride of Plymouth’s’ crew. As it is I’m rather in the dark. There’s something about that personal I don’t like. I mistrust it.”

“Reaper,” said Dr. Jollier, “sometimes I think you’re too suspicious. In fact, I believe you’ve admitted it yourself. It isn’t unlikely that Clemence

had some agent to help him carry out his infernal schemes. That agent found out more about his employer than Clemence intended. It's generally the way. Now he wants to make some money from his knowledge. Probably he knows Clemence has been arrested. Perhaps he's looking to State's evidence."

The detective shook his head.

"No, no," he said, "I can't believe it of Clemence. He was too sharp for that. The man that hoodwinked me openly as he did in the Second Avenue house, wouldn't commit the blunder of even having a confederate, and he'd be mighty careful in his dealings with a tool. Clemence was too much of a genius to fail there. He's the sharpest fellow I ever came across, crooked or honest. If you were talking of any ordinary criminal you'd be right."

Before Dr. Jollier could reply, the servant appeared and announced a visitor.

"He wouldn't give his name, sir," said the flunkey. "He said his business was private. His looks ain't just right, sir. His clothes're pretty poor."

"Then he must be a questionable character, Smith," responded Dr. Jollier, gravely. "However, bring him in."

The caller was indeed a suspicious-looking individual. He was a tallish man, wore a frayed and ill-fitting suit of the kind second-hand dealers provide, a long dingy overcoat that came within six inches of his heels, and shoes with liberal cracks in them. His soiled Alpine hat of black felt he awkwardly held in one hand. The lower part of his face was covered

with a bushy black beard, somewhat unkempt. His eyes shifted about uneasily, but there lurked in the general appearance of his face an impression of self-command, bordering on the insolent.

Dr. Jollier rose, advanced towards him and said :

"I'm the one you asked for."

Quoth the caller in a gruff voice, without looking squarely at the speaker :

"I want to see you alone."

"Come with me, then," said Dr. Jollier, and he started to take the visitor into an adjoining room.

At this point Detective Reaper, who had been closely scrutinizing the man's features, quietly spoke up :

"No, Doctor, don't go with him. He'll talk well enough here."

Dr. Jollier turned in surprise. The caller looked about surlily.

"It's all right," continued the detective, coolly. "I have the pleasure of knowing him. He's an ex-convict and his name is Paxton."

"Damn you !" growled the man, darting a fierce glance at his accuser. He added, less forcibly : "You're mistaken."

"Oh, no, my boy," responded Detective Reaper, cheerfully. "A few whiskers can't fool me. You're Paxton and I guess you know who I am. My name's Reaper. Perhaps you'll remember I sent you up the river for a couple of years."

"So you did," burst out the other, at length, with

an oath, and I've been waiting for a chance to get square with you."

"The chance won't come for a good while," said the detective, grimly. "You've got more time to serve yet. Your pal peached on you in that last job of yours—tapping the racing wire in Thirty-third Street. The old man's been wanting you badly for that."

Paxton seemed momentarily taken aback with this bit of news. But he quickly recovered himself and said, sulkily :

"All right, that's good for a year and a half—"

"Five years," interrupted the detective. "This isn't the first time you've done the same trick."

"Well, then, make it five ; but if it's fifty I'll get hunk."

"Come, Paxton," said Detective Reaper, soothingly. "There's no use of your having hard feelings against me. You wouldn't do me dirt if you could. I always treated you like a gentleman. But what'd you want of the Doctor ?"

"You'd like to know, eh ?" sneered the telegrapher. "Well, you'll never know, or he either, and you'll both be sorry for it."

With another less hardened type of criminal Detective Reaper would have perhaps made some allusion to the terrifying "Third Degree" to extort a confession. Such threat, or even the realization, would only make Paxton laugh. So the detective said, mildly :

"Well, you can do as you please, but if it's worth anything to us it might do you some good, too."

The telegrapher knit his brows closely together.

"Is this a square deal?" he said suspiciously.

"On my word," responded the detective.

"Then," said Paxton, "I'll speak a word to Dr. Jollier here. I know he's an honest man. If he says after hearing that the rest is worth telling, that it's worth my going scot free, and a bonus besides, that he'll guarantee that, why I'll talk."

"It looks like a fair proposition," said Dr. Jollier quietly.

The detective waved his hand in assent.

Dr. Jollier and Paxton stepped into the next room. The door was locked. Detective Reaper anxiously awaited their reappearance. In less than five minutes they returned.

"Well, Reaper," said the Doctor, "I've promised immunity and \$200 in cash within twelve hours."

"Then it must be something important," quoth the surprised detective.

"It is. Paxton is the man who wrote that personal you were showing me a little while ago."

"Yes," grunted the telegrapher, flinging himself into a chair, "I put that in the paper. But I was hard up and I didn't want to wait for a slow answer. So I came here to-night to see the Doc personally. As long as he's promised me protection I'll tell everything."

"First tell me before you begin," said Detective Reaper, "how in the deuce you knew who Captain Mandeville was and how did you know we wanted information about him?"

"That's easy," replied Paxton. "Captain Mande-

ville is the name by which I knew this man. I suppose he had other names. I happened to see that ad. and I saw there was a chance for me. I knew Dr. Jollier must have got onto Mandeville's crookedness."

A dozen other questions were on the detective's lips, but he did not put them and allowed Paxton to give his narrative in his own way.

The telegrapher's story was really not a very long one. It commenced with his meeting Captain Mandeville soon after his release from Sing Sing prison the previous spring. The ex-convict was homeless, penniless, and half sick. Under the guise of benevolence Mandeville gave him money and got him lodgings. Soon afterwards Paxton was arrested on suspicion of having committed a burglary. In some mysterious way his benefactor had him released. A month later again the telegrapher was arrested, on a like charge. After several weeks' detention in the Tombs the case came to court. Strange to relate a flaw was discovered in the indictment and the prisoner was discharged. Paxton believed this second escape due to the same intervention. Captain Mandeville remained in constant communication with him through the medium of a branch post-office. He periodically gave him sums of money. In the early fall he told Paxton the time had come to repay these beneficences. He sent the ex-convict on many strange errands. The first of these was to dog the footsteps of George Barrett and find out his daily habits, when he went to his business, when he returned, and the like. Next Paxton was commissioned to ascertain sim-

ilar facts concerning Police Sergeant Phillips. Then his employer told him to learn all he could about the Contagious Diseases Bureau. The final and most important service was the cutting of the Atlantic cable and the substitution of the forged message for that of the Liverpool Chief of Police. Shortly after this Mandeville gave the telegrapher \$500 and told him to go West, as there was nothing more for him to do. Paxton accordingly went to Chicago. When the money was spent he returned, which was two weeks ago.

Mandeville's appearance? He was a man hard to describe, but he wore a moustache and goatee, after the style of the Gauls. All this and more Paxton told in considerable detail, doubtless with some broidery of his own.

It was past nine o'clock when Detective Reaper led the telegrapher before Cell No. 15 at Police Headquarters and lighted a gas jet so that a strong illumination was cast into the iron-barred chamber.

Paxton looked critically at the pale-faced occupant of the cell. Then he said, decisively :

"No, that ain't Captain Mandeville."

CHAPTER XXXI.

SUICIDE.

That same New Year's Eve Arthur Leland was assigned by his city editor to the Tenderloin District, it being the weekly holiday of the reporter who regularly attended to the news of that section. As an occasional assignment it was not unpleasant. The same genial journalists were there—Hartley Thomas the self contained, Foster the cynic, Cooper the confiding, and Donovan the exquisite. Zarah the Bagdad dancer, "that old cat Mme. La Salle" and Diamond Mary had gone, but there were fresh topics of conversation in new meteors flashing across the brief Tenderloin horizon. During the course of the evening, Leland, accompanied by Foster, visited three theatres and saw parts of as many performances. In the first playhouse the plot was just commencing to thicken when the young men were compelled to depart, in the second the curtain had fallen on the most powerful act when they arrived, in the third they only beheld the denouement. It is not the most agreeable method of theatre-going.

At half-past ten Leland and his companion repaired to the general rendezvous of the critics and reporters in the lobby of a centrally located theatre, where notes were nightly compared. One of the critics announced his firm intention of dealing severely with—"roasting" was the word he used—

a certain play and would not listen to expostulation. Cooper distributed a small item he had obtained at a music hall, and Donovan told of the humorous mishap of a manager. The quintet of reporters then went to the Anonymous Club to write up these things, also some station-house news, and send them to their respective offices by messenger.

A quarter past eleven all but Cooper walked over to the police station. The crop of prisoners was much as usual, except that a few obstreperous horn blowers were brought in. Magdalenes, young and old, some weeping and some not, an odd colored one, impudent beggars, pursy, blinking intoxicated citizens, saloon brawlers, a petty swindler—these were the accustomed characters that made up the panoramic police view, one which does not lack its interest to the beholder.

"Well," remarked Hartley Thomas, reflectively, just after a shrieking female was dragged to a cell, "if Sergeant Phillips was on the desk to-night he'd petrify that wench with a glance. He was a genius in dealing with 'em, except the drunks. Poor old chap, I liked him in spite of his cold fish-eye."

"He did have his merits," assented Foster, "and he always treated us well. But I'd hate to die the way he did. I've wondered more than once what really did cause his death. This talk of heart disease is rot. Everybody who doesn't fall over a precipice nowadays is killed with heart disease. Leland, what do you think was the cause?"

"I—I wouldn't like to say," stammered the young man.

"I think it was partly loss of breath," volunteered Donovan, coolly, scratching a match on the under side of his boot heel.

"Donovan," said Hartley Thomas, judicially, "you're a cold-blooded sort of individual who thinks a deuced sight more of the cut of his clothes than anything else."

"Perhaps so," was the calm answer. "But after all it's only a choice of vanities."

Cooper rushed into the station-house.

"Fellows," he cried breathlessly, "there's a suicide in Forty-third Street! My office just called me up on it. They got it from Headquarters."

"It's out of our district," said Thomas, buttoning his overcoat, "but I guess we'd better all go up. We can get there quicker than any one else. I know my people'll want me to cover it."

The reporters hurried out. As they hastened towards Sixth Avenue, Cooper told the exceedingly meagre details. The suicide was a man, at No. — West Forty-third Street. His name was not yet ascertained.

With an undefinable thrill Leland recognized that the number was next to the house of Prof. Sartoris.

At the corner of Sixth Avenue Thomas suggested that they take a cab as the speediest means of conveyance. Accordingly the quintette piled into a four-wheeler and told the jehu not to spare his nag.

"Judging from the neighborhood, it ought to be a pretty good case," shouted Foster, in order to make himself heard above the rattling of the cab.

"Yes," roared back Cooper, "it's near Fifth Avenue."

When the carriage turned into Forty-third Street Leland looked at his watch by the passing illumination of the corner arc light. He saw it was ten minutes of midnight.

The vehicle stopped with a jolt.

"Here y'are, gents," sang out the driver; but the journalists had already tumbled out.

Thomas nimbly ran up the steps of the house. The outer door was shut and the mansion was silent and dark.

"This is the number all right enough," he muttered, peering at the door plate, "but there must be a mistake."

"Yes, there is!" exclaimed Cooper from over his shoulder. "Don't you see the lights next door?"

Next door was Prof. Sartoris's.

Standing in a shadow at the head of the steps was a helmeted bluecoat.

Rushing up to him, Thomas demanded:

"Suicide here?"

"Sure!" said the policeman, cordially. "Go right in."

Followed by Donovan, Foster and Cooper, the questioner hastily entered the house.

"Officer," said Leland, faintly, "do you know who it is?"

"Man of the house, I guess. You're a reporter, too, ain't you? Why don't you go in?"

Leland staggered across the threshold.

A flood of light streamed into the hallway from

the open study door. The noise of shifting feet and the low buzz of voices floated out.

With an exquisite sensation of sickness, Leland tremblingly advanced to the portal. The sight that he beheld in open-mouthed horror compelled him to clutch the sides of the doorway lest he should fall.

Lying on a sofa almost in the centre of the study, face upwards, was the dead body of Prof. Ralph Sartoris. A great ragged bullet hole was in the right temple, and there was another orifice in the left side of the crimsoned forehead where the glancing ball had come out. A quantity of brain matter oozed from the first wound. A drop of blood had trickled down to the tip of the nose and remained there uncongealed. On the floor was a considerable pool of the red fluid. The right arm hung over the side of the couch and the weapon of self destruction, a heavy black barreled revolver of the bull-dog pattern, lay on the carpet, almost touched by the nerveless fingers. The other arm crossed the chest. The limbs were fully extended. Despite the horrible damage of the wounds, the features of the dead wore a singular look of placidity. It was a strange fact and not to be unnoticed, even at first sight, and in larger circumstance, that instead of the venerable silvery locks, a crop of closely clipped grayish hair covered the head.

A police roundsman sat in a chair beside the couch. He was explaining to one of the reporters what he knew of the case. Two others were bending over the corpse. The fourth reporter, Donovan,

was looking about the apartment and trying to find where in the ceiling the bullet had gone.

Now there was another smaller room connected with the study, its sole means of access. It had been the Professor's sanctum sanctorum that no one but himself ever entered. The door of this room was half ajar and it too was lighted up. Leland's eyes mistily wandered thither. There briefly passed across the area of yellow illumination inside the figure of—Detective Reaper.

Moved by unexplained impulse the young man stumbled across the study to the inner chamber. A tall stranger in a long overcoat was standing in a corner. Detective Reaper, stooping over a cabinet, was transferring the contents of a drawer to an open Gladstone bag by his side.

"Reaper," said the young man, hoarsely, "what are you doing here?"

The detective quickly turned. He gazed a moment at the marble-faced speaker and led him unresisting to a chair.

"Paxton, close the door."

The stranger obeyed.

"Why," said the detective, softly, placing one hand on Leland's shoulder, "the corpse in the next room is that of Captain Mandeville."

Just then a loud universal blare of mingled sound, shrieking whistles, jangling bells, raucous horns, and reverberating cannon, proclaimed the death of the old year and the birth of the new.

It was a mighty requiem.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ANOTHER VIEW.

It is necessary to return to the time three hours ago when Paxton at Police Headquarters made his negative declaration concerning the occupant of Cell No. 15. Detective Reaper was completely confounded. At first his suspicions were aroused. Was it a cleverly devised plot for the murderer and his accomplice to meet, possibly the latter to attempt in that favorable place to overpower his escort and release the former? The detective put himself on his guard.

Paxton repeated his statement with emphasis. Detective Reaper told him to go upstairs. He promptly did so, followed by the detective. So the worst part of the supposed plot had not carried through.

The Vidocq was mentally debating whether the wisest course was not to immediately lock up the telegrapher when that individual remarked he had omitted something in his confession at Dr. Iollier's house.

"Out with it, then," said the other.

Paxton replied it was that on one occasion he had secretly followed Captain Mandeville to a certain address. It was after a midnight interview in a Bowery beer garden, the usual rendezvous. By circuitous routes, riding in surface cars, cabs, and in

elevated trains, backwards and forwards, Mandeville had finally arrived after an hour at Sixth Avenue and Forty-second Street. Paxton had with great difficulty managed to remain in pursuit unseen and also alighted there from the elevated. Mandeville walked about several blocks. In Forty-third Street, near Fifth Avenue, he suddenly disappeared within a brownstone house. Paxton waited fifteen minutes and then cautiously approached the house. He was unable from darkness to ascertain the number (moreover a policeman was passing), but he fixed the location by the electric light post standing in front of the mansion below. Then he went away. He did not dare to find out the number by returning in the daytime, or to learn who were the dwellers in the house.

As soon as Detective Reaper heard this he decided not to lock up the telegrapher, at least for a while. He hurried him to Broadway and the two rode uptown in a cable car.

Ten o'clock was striking when the detective and the ex-convict swiftly made their way through West Forty-third Street. The latter stopped in front of the last arc light in the street.

"There," said he, pointing, "unless this post has been changed, is the house I saw Mandeville go in."

Detective Reaper looked sharply at the Sartoris dwelling.

"You're sure you aren't mistaken in the street?"

"Dead certain."

"Then," mentally soliloquized the detective, "I've

made one of the biggest mistakes in history—but by God ! I'll rectify it this very night. Paxton is telling the truth. If I'd only known I was right at first !”

“What're you going to do ?” ventured the telegrapher.

“Never mind. Come with me.”

Detective Reaper strode along at such a pace that the long legs of his companion were fully employed in keeping up with him. A cab was found in Fifth Avenue. The pair were rapidly driven to the house of His Honor the police justice in University Place. Unfortunately His Honor was not in. He had gone to Daly's Theatre. Silently cursing inopportune chance the detective ordered the jarvie to drive thither.

It was towards the close of the last act when Detective Reaper, brushing past an expostulative usher, walked down through the main isle of the theatre to the orchestra circle where sat His Honor. The justice nodded assent to the few whispered words, drew forth a document, hastily scratched his signature at the bottom with a stylographic pen, and gave it to the detective, who retired amid the curious gaze of all observers.

On the way uptown Detective Reaper properly filled in the warrant, name, date, etc.

Eleven o'clock found the detective and his companion alighting from the cab in front of the Sartoris house. The door bell was rung. After a considerable interval a woman servant responded. Was Prof. Sartoris at home ? Yes, but he had locked him-

self in his study earlier in the evening and had given orders not to be disturbed, even by particular friends.

"Our business is very important," said the detective. "We must see him to-night."

There was something in the tone of the speaker that caused the servant to reply :

"Very well, sir. Step inside. What name shall I give ?"

"Mr. Vandewater."

The servant returned in a couple of moments and said Prof. Sartoris would be in the parlor directly.

As the minutes slowly passed without the Professor appearing Detective Reaper became uneasy. He rose from his seat, glanced at his watch, and muttered :

"There's something wrong. Paxton, we ought to have gone right in."

At length the detective started towards the door. But before he reached it a pistol shot rang out.

The two men looked at each other and rushed to the study. They burst open the locked door.

Captain Mandeville was dead and the warrant was not needed.

That very night, it appeared, the murderer had intended flight. A clipping containing the telegrapher's proposal of betrayal was found by the detective on a writing-desk. Evidently Mandeville knew or strongly suspected his former agent was capable of fully denouncing him to the representatives of justice. He had sent his daughter to visit a friend in Harlem and dismissed for the night all but

one of the servants. He was in the act of disguising himself for his departure when Detective Reaper and Paxton arrived. A hand satchel was packed with the necessities of travel and besides several hundred dollars in cash, it contained a passenger ticket of a vessel that sailed for a Mediterranean port in the morning. The gas log in the hearth was lighted and there were indications that papers had been destroyed, but there had not been time to burn a pile of letters and documents that lay on a chair beside the fire. When the servant announced the callers Mandeville asked her what they looked like. He undoubtedly recognized from the description who they were and saw there was only one escape—death. A few hours more and he could have laughed at pursuit.

Sending the telegrapher for a policeman, that the usual formalities might be observed, Detective Reaper set to work to make a private investigation and gather any papers bearing on the murderous side of the dead man's life. Among the unburned documents were typewritten copies of the letters Captain Mandeville had sent to his victims. From the servant, despite her weeping agitation, the detective managed to obtain considerable information. The most important of it concerned the secret chamber. The detective broke into this room and found as he expected a well equipped bacteriological laboratory. There were cultures of a dozen of the virulent diseases and all the necessary tools. A letter written by the Professor to a European scientist seemed to intimate the cultures were gotten in Ger-

many. In a drawer were a few loose manuscript sheets which contained vague references to the "object" and "subject." Detective Reaper did not disturb them, after seeing one page inscribed: "Metaphysics: A Treatise of the Twentieth Century." Among the other discoveries was a package in an envelope. It was addressed in the Professor's hand to Arthur Leland. A side inscription said it was not to be opened until three days after the writer's death or disappearance.

None of the documents cast much light on how Mandeville spent the interval between his rescue from the faraway island on which he had been marooned by the "Bride of Plymouth's" mutineers and the time he became connected with Columbia College, six years ago.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PUBLIC SIDE.

The tragic story of Prof. Sartoris's demise was the *chef d'œuvre* of the morning newspapers. People made little self-congratulatory shrugs as they saw the great black sensational head lines and the quantity of detailed printed matter beneath.

The cause of the suicide seemed an absolute mystery. Detective-Sergeant Reaper, as the accounts unanimously stated, had gone to the Professor's to

report progress in the investigation of a small burglary that had recently taken place in the house. Reaper was accompanied by another man, a private detective. Soon after their arrival was announced the fatal shot was heard. All evening the Professor had been studying and writing. The sole servant said he never appeared more cheerful than when she informed him of the presence of the visitors.

He was a quiet, studious man, yet genial and polite, was devoted to his only daughter, had many interests, was not as known financially embarrassed, and, in short, was the last person on earth one would imagine would wreak self-destruction. Philosophers and men that think don't as a rule commit suicide.

One of the papers ventured to put forth a weak theory that it was not suicide at all, but an accident. But the theories were generally reserved for the second day articles. These also contained innumerable interviews with policemen, servants, college officers, students, and every one however remotely connected with the Professor or the tragedy. A more or less complete and accurate biography of Prof. Sartoris, obtained heaven knows where, was likewise given.

All his late associates in the college were unanimous in lamenting his demise as a great loss to speculative science and pedagogics. They did not omit expression of personal esteem. They expressed forcible opinion that only a suddenly unbalanced mind could have prompted the unfortunate deed.

The funeral was simple, but it was attended by many distinguished men.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CONCLUSION.

Dr. Francois Clemence was of course released with apologies. For various reasons which may be guessed he did not attempt to obtain legal satisfaction for his incarceration, but quietly departed on an early train for the West, after sending to his superior his resignation as assistant bacteriologist in the city laboratory. Before his departure he received assurances that no one would try to learn what was the "unfortunate thing" of former years to which he had unwittingly confessed. A California medical journal recently devoted several pages to an important discovery in bacteria made by the "eminent Dr. Clemence."

The good fat Dr. Wilbur remained indefinitely in his old position and did faithful work.

Bella still assists the police at intervals. As for Baby and Shriner, they have not lost their cunning. The relative merits of various criminals are yet warm subjects of discussion with them.

Paxton the informer settled down with the aid of his financial recompense to pursue an honest existence. But in a few months he became restive, went to Texas and joined a company of bandits. The Vigilantes finally dealt him mortal punishment. He died with a sneer.

Arthur Leland, at the expiration of the specified

three days, opened the package left him by Prof. Sartoris. It simply contained two certificates. One showed that the Professor's supposed daughter was really the child of a young English couple who had been suddenly killed together in a railway accident. The other document was the record of adoption, which occurred when the girl was four years old. A few weeks later the young man took these papers to his fiance and proposed immediate marriage. The event, however, was postponed for six months. Then the ceremony quietly took place. A modest legacy coming to him, Leland was enabled to take his bride on a European trip, partly for a change of scene. Upon their return the young man again labored in the newspaper field for a brief period. A favorable opportunity then presenting itself, he became connected with the staff of a magazine. At present he is debating whether short stories or longer productions of fiction are his forte. He frequently meets his old journalistic confreres of the Tenderloin, South Fifth Avenue and elsewhere, and these occasions are always pleasurable on both sides. By force of will Leland has blotted out several chapters of his life and they trouble him little. His charming and pretty young wife, one would think, never saw shadow of care. So are we made.

Detective Reaper by mutual agreement destroyed all of the papers of Captain Mandeville he had collected. He turned over the laboratory, with Dr. Clemence's private one also, to Dr. Wilbur, who found use for the cultures. The report of his investigations in the case of "Dr. Jollier, etc.," was

marked in the secret official book of the Detective Bureau, "No results." The detective gave up cigarettes and took to reading poetry. His weakness for dress he still retains and he likes to join the Sunday parade on Fifth Avenue. It is true he often combines business with pleasure on such occasions, and woe be to the straggling malefactor who meets his keen gaze. He continues to gain renown by his captures and there is talk he may be the next Inspector. He doesn't care either way.

Dr. Jollier offered his resignation to the Health Board. It was rejected. He would have insisted had not the obnoxious president been removed. However, the Governor shortly appointed the Doctor to be Health Officer of the Port of New York. He performs his wider and possibly more responsible duties to the satisfaction of everybody, even the daily press. No one knows how many dangerous epidemics his watchful efforts have barred out of the country each year.

Once in a long while the three friends meet and dine together. They are always very gay.

EPILOGUE.

THE CITY OF THE SILENT.

Greenwood, that magnificent City of the Silent, possesses many charms of a sombre sort to the reflective visitor. Gazing in dusky sepulchres upon the crumbling caskets of ancient Pharaohs, or traversing the labyrinthine passages of catacombs, is at best a dryly mournful business. There is a deathness which exceeds death. All soul has truly fled, and ages since. Only may the peering archæologist extract aught of benefit. But in the western last abode of mortals' populous home, there is a subtle power that sometimes aids the chastened imagination to dimly, feebly view the distant borders of the great Eternal. In this world of chaotic night, darkest at midday, such tiniest rays of light are to be treasured above all tangible gems and gold.

Perhaps late in spring, a shining afternoon, when grass is green and flowers bloom and trees are in full leaf, the visitor chooses to wander along the quiet avenues. He has passed the tall cenotaphs of battle-famed on land and sea. On either side stand the marble or granite tombs of the place's aristocracy. They bear sculptured inscriptions and not a few have inwrought portals of bronze. Some are more highly decorated with symbolic figures and surmounting spires. A few have freshly withered garlands pendant from their doors. Do these tenants sleep better?

Further on a drooping, sighing willow marks a square grass plot where rests a distinguished son of earth. In life he was the center of a nation's gaze, and rightly. Next may pensive contemplation look upon the venerable dwelling of a departed giant—one that thought. Six feet are likewise sufficient for him. The roll of fame here drops many names, but a considerable list withstand cold stone and sod. But what difference? All are here and now alike.

Yet a little on and older habitations appear. The melancholy lines are barely decipherable upon the decaying stones. The weepers for those pilgrims have in turn been wept over and so on, rank upon rank, for many generations. Sturdy men were they, valiant foundations of the present. Their bones must have long been dust. Let the daisies freely grow above them and the long grass wave about their falling indexes.

Now one beholds a wide undulating field thickly planted with uncountable snowy slabs. It is a stunted forest of marble. It is a vast congregation of but one sect. The blue sky roofs it. Nature delivers a perpetual sermon. A weak yet more articulate choral voice is that of the low-sobbing pines. Here is everlasting harmony, a symphony of tempered silence. Melodies without sound, deep organ roll, or soft as zephyrs, penetrate to the attuned ear. Sacred serenity sits everywhere enthroned.

With thoughts unutterable the visitor presses his way up the verdant brow of an eminence. He gains the crest. A rare sight unfolds itself. Encircling below are the hills and dales and gently sloping

valleys of the metropolis of sleepers. The pure architecture is lent an ethereal glow by the glittering sunlight. The symbolic whiteness of the myriad marbles contrasts with the not too profuse adornments of the season. On yonder hill a stately spired mausoleum is enclosed by a cluster of fragrant evergreens. A warbler of the air flits among the branches, but her notes seem hushed. Elsewhere in a sequestered dell a towering column rises and is surrounded by beflowered tombs. Creeping vines entwine the pedestal of the monument. To the south the extended vision sees the dazzling waters of the bay. To the north the eye discerns the distant housetops of modern Babylon.

A balmy breeze blows across the eminence and sets the leaves of a crowning cypress to whispering. Under shadow of this tree the visitor beholds a simple marble slab. He reads upon it these chiseled lines :

PROFESSOR RALPH SARTORIS.

DIED DECEMBER 31, 189-.

Aged 56 Years.

HIS GOOD WORKS LIVE.

On the reverse side of the stone, near the bottom and hidden by grass, is a very minute inscription, never noticed. It is as follows :

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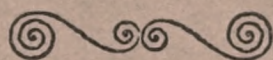
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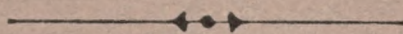
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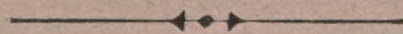
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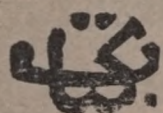
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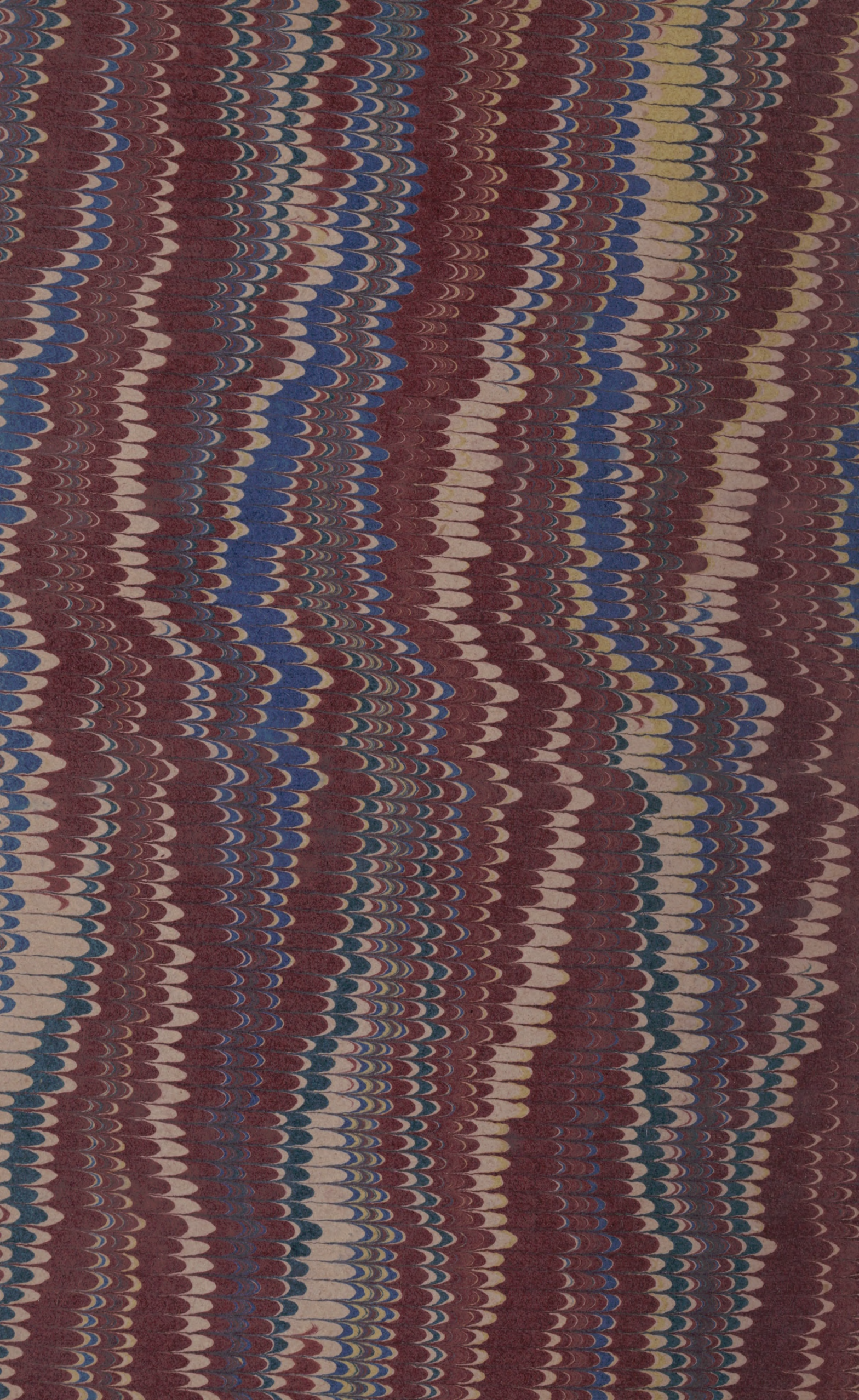
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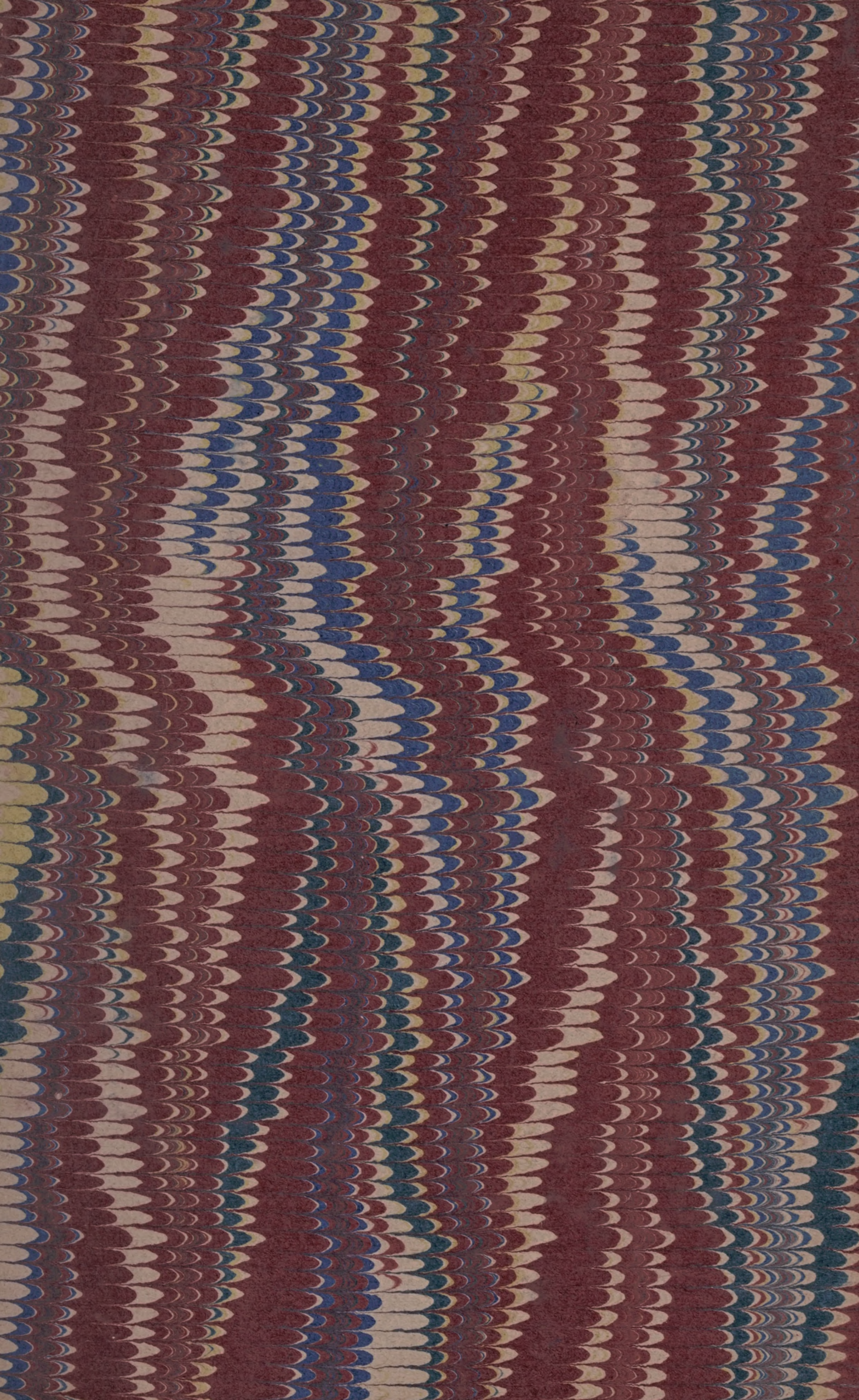
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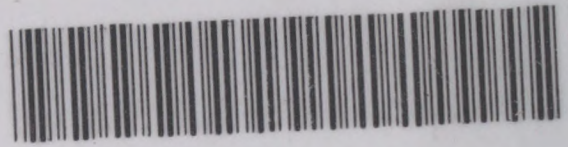
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